

FY22 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 Earman
- James Wylie

LSWCD Staff

- Suzanne Brown, District Operations Manager
- Kris Dennen, Program Assistant
- Jay Frankenfield, Conservation Specialist III
- Kimberly Gleason, Financial Administrative Asst.
- Pat McIlvaine, Senior Conservation Specialist
- Chris Van Vlack, Urban/Ag Cons. Specialist
- Jennifer Venable, Education/Outreach Specialist

On behalf of the Directors and staff of the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District, I am pleased to present our FY22 Annual Report (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022). The report provides an overview of our programs as well as a summary of our accomplishments during the year.

Loudoun SWCD's FY22 meant staff returning more to the office, and the return of popular outreach events like our rain barrel workshops which we held for the first time since 2019. LSWCD also saw record participation in our county funded Non-Agricultural Tree Planting Program and the state funded Virginia Conservation Assistance Program which you can read more about in the report. The increased participation in the tree planting program was partially due to the ability to once again work with landowners to plant trees (and install livestock stream fencing) within floodplain riparian areas. We appreciate the work of the county General Services staff in assisting with making this possible.

The Virginia Ag BMP Cost share Program financially, technically, 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 voluntary practices including the installation of livestock 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 FY2022, LSWCD allocated over \$1,200,000.00 in state dollars to Loudoun Ag producers to assist with the installation of these and other conservation practices. These monies also assist local businesses hired to install the BMPs, which has a positive impact on the western Loudoun economy. This cost share amount far exceeds any other annual total in the history of the LSWCD. The participation of Loudoun producers in the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Program shows agriculture is still vibrant contributor to Loudoun's economy and that the county's farmers are committed to environmental stewardship.

Loudoun also allocated \$7,524.13 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!

Despite continued COVID-19 restrictions, LSWCD Conservation Education programs and events were conducted whenever possible and new ways to educate grew from the challenges. Classroom presentations and tabling events continued with COVID precautions in place. Our Youth Conservation Leadership Institute had four (the most ever!) amazing students participate this year and LSWCD mentored three of them on projects focused on water quality. The Education Specialist served as the chair of planning for the Student Environmental Showcase (SEAS), an in-person event which allowed students and community to showcase their environmental efforts. Over 200 students, teachers and community members attended! A SEAS online portion was also coordinated by LSWCD staff in an effort to be more inclusive in light of COVID concerns. LSWCD Education staff planned and hosted the Area II Competition at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. Approximately ninety students and coaches from all over Area II districts region participated. Multiple staff and directors also volunteered at the competition as judges and assistants. An enjoyable day of learning and competing in our annual area natural resource competition was had by all.

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 of course the landowners, residents, farmers, and students of Loudoun for helping us put conservation on the ground. Promoting stewardship of our environment and protection of our natural resources is a team effort, and we are honored to be part of a great team here in Loudoun working to meet those goals.

Sincerely,
James B. Christian
Chairman

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS VIRGINIA AG BMP COST SHARE

> (Top right) LSWCD and DCR Engineering staff survey for a new spring fed livestock watering system south of Lovettsville.

> Big Spring Farm and Big Spring HOA in Leesburg combined to plant over 5 acres of trees in their two adjoining communities through LSWCD's Non-Ag Tree Planting Program.

- \$978,511.89 reimbursed to local landowners for voluntary participation in the FY22 program.
- 30 SL-6, SL-7 and WP-2 practices installed with 43,996' of fencing.
- 24 CCI practices installed with 150,116' of streambank protected.
- 13 SL-8B, SL-8, SL-8H, SL-1 and SL-10 practices installing 966.5



LOUDOUN COUNTY COST SHARE PROGRAM



- \$7,524.13 paid to local landowners in FY2021.
- 2 SL-6 and WP-2W practices installed with 965' of fencing.
- 1 CCI practice installed with 350' of streambank protected.

CONSERVATION FARM PLAN ASSISTANCE

Conservation Farm Plans are one of the longest serving resources LSWCD has provided to Loudoun's farmers and landowners (and now backyard poultry producers). These plans can fulfill requirements of Loudoun County's Land Use Tax Assessment Program, Ag and Forrestral District Program, zoning requirements for agricultural building construction, and small acreage livestock regulations.

In FY22, small acreage poultry plans continued to be a hot item with more residents looking to keep backyard chickens, turkeys, and ducks. These plans provide good "rule of thumb" management techniques for keeping livestock on small acreage and are developed with resources from both the District as well as Virginia Cooperative Extension. In addition, several of Loudoun's Ag and Forestal Districts were up for renewal which meant new plans for new owners of parcels in those Districts and updates for new uses for farmers previously enrolled.

District staff have also worked with Loudoun Cooperative Extension to provide Spanish farm plan template sheets to make sure plans aren't 'lost in translation' for homeowners and producers whose first language may not be English. Overall, 39 new Conservation Plans were prepared by LSWCD in FY22, 21 of which were small acreage poultry plans.

URBAN CONSERVATION

With life creeping back to some level of “new normal” the LSWCD’s Urban and Suburban programs also put more conservation on the ground and saw a big increase in participation from all around Loudoun.

During FY22, 10 new non-agricultural tree planting projects were signed up, totaling over 18 acres of new forest. These huge increases in applications and plantings (an increase over the 4 plantings covering 4 acres last fiscal



year) occurred with the new funding for engineering studies to once again allow riparian buffer plantings in floodplain areas. These projects spanned the county from Ashburn to Leesburg and from Round Hill to Lucketts. These forested areas replace managed turfgrass that along with the water quality benefits will also increase wildlife habitat.

LSWCD has also continued to help deliver the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program to Loudoun residents. In FY22, LSWCD signed up four new VCAP practices and completed five (some carried over from the past fiscal year). These projects included conservation landscaping in Ashburn and Leesburg, Rainwater Harvesting in Leesburg and Hillsboro, and Permeable Pavers in Leesburg. These projects are retrofits to existing homes that help to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution and excess run off to Loudoun’s waterways. These projects help mirror the Ag BMP programs efforts for farmers but with offerings tailored to urban and suburban properties.

Beyond the cost share provided by our tree planting and VCAP programs, LSWCD continues to provide e-mail, phone, and field visits for homeowners seeking advice on soil and water issues around the home such as erosion issues and drainage questions.

< VCAP funds helped install a new permeable paver driveway in downtown Leesburg along with native shrubs and perennials.

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 cover Loudoun County 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.

“For every dollar invested by the Loudoun Board of Supervisors, \$5.42 is generated from other sources of income.”

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 **\$5.42** for every dollar invested by the Loudoun County BOS in FY 2022.



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www.lswcd.org

The LSWCD website is maintained to inform and educate the public about District activities.

Visit www.lswcd.org. District activities are also publicized on the District Facebook page.

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

Despite continued COVID-19 restrictions, LSWCD Conservation Education programs and events were conducted whenever possible and new ways to educate grew from the challenges.

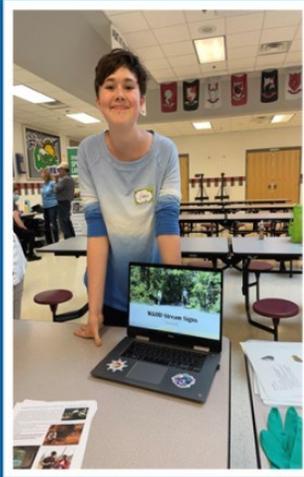
- The use of three conservation “check-out” trunks reached 330 students and adults.
- Live presentations were given to 1225 teachers and students in nine local schools.
- The soil tunnel activity reached over 70 youth and teachers.
- Staff co-mentored three students for the Youth Conservation Leadership Institute. Four local students participated in the program this year (the most since YCLI began in our district).
- Staff served on the Loudoun Environmental Education Alliance (LEEA) board as well as the programming committee.
- As programming chair for LEEA, education staff planned the Student Environmental Action Showcase (SEAS) event. The event occurred both online and in-person. Over 200 students, teachers and community members attended.
- Staff recruited and assisted two teams for the Area II Envirothon.
- Staff planned and hosted the Area II Competition at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. Approximately ninety students and coaches from all over Area II participated. Multiple staff and Directors also volunteered at the competition as judges and assistants.
- Staff planned, recorded and edited the Arbor Day Celebration which was presented online alongside Loudoun County Urban Forestry.
- Staff facilitated one community storm drain marking project.
- Staff hosted one student as a host for LCPS “Job for a Day” program.
- Staff hosted one student for a two-week capstone experience.
- Staff received six scholarship applications and awarded the top two with scholarship money towards conservation education undergraduate work.
- Over 3500 pieces of Soil and Water Stewardship Week Education Materials were ordered, sorted and delivered to 28 elementary schools in Loudoun by staff.
- Staff supported two official stream surveys of local waterways.
- Two YCLI students were nominated to participate in the Chesapeake Youth Initiative program.
- Staff participated in special community events including Goose Creek Family Celebration, Hail to the Trail, Creek Critters of the Catoctin, Student Environmental Action Showcase (SEAS), Pollinator Festival at Banshee Reeks, Loudoun County Fair
- LSWCD online watershed lesson on YouTube reached over 1000 views in the past year.
- Staff mentored and supported a college summer intern.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Youth Conservation Leadership Institute



Salvation For Our Streams
Anthony Santos



Stream Signage on W & OD Trail
Emma Lloyd



Stream Bank Erosion
Cooper Niess

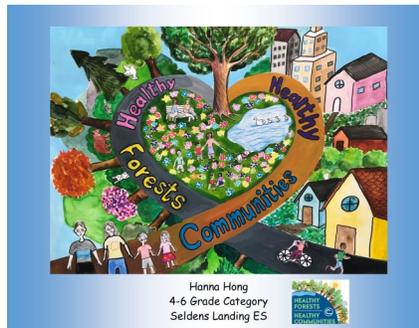


The City of Streams
Sharanya Maddukuri

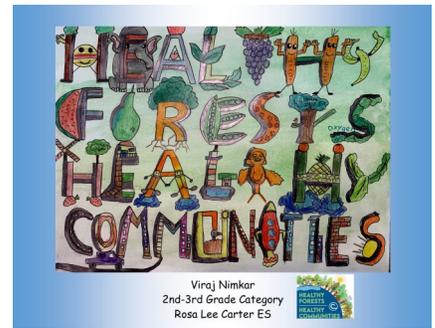
2021 Conservation Poster Contest Winners



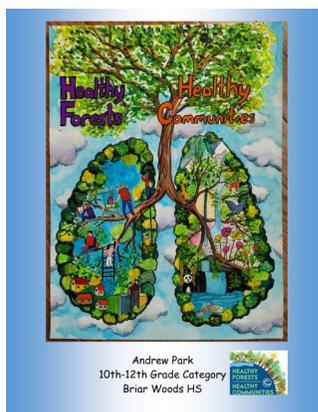
Vaibhav Vadrevu
K - 1 Grade Category
Waxpool ES



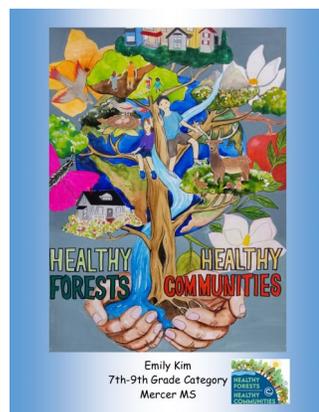
Hanna Hong
4-6 Grade Category
Seldens Landing ES



Viraj Nimkar
2nd-3rd Grade Category
Rosa Lee Carter ES



Andrew Park
10th-12th Grade Category
Briar Woods HS



Emily Kim
7th-9th Grade Category
Mercer MS

CONSERVATION IN ACTION

LSWCD SUPPORTS OUR YOUTH!

Student Environmental Action Showcase

LSWCD staff served as the planning chair for the Student Environmental Action Showcase (SEAS) event. Over 200 students, community partners and visitors attended the third annual Loudoun Student Environmental Action Showcase (SEAS) on April 26th at TRAILSIDE MS in Ashburn, VA. Students of all ages and community partners came together for this in-person event to promote environmental stewardship in Loudoun County.

