Views From The Foothills

A Publication of the Culpeper Soil & Water Conservation District
Serving Culpeper, Greene, Madison, Orange & Rappahannock Counties
www.culpeperswcd.org

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M. Johnson

Inside This Issue

Welcome!

You are receiving this newsletter because you receive land use tax benefits in our counties. Please call 540-825-8591 or email stephanied@culpeperswcd.org to remove yourself from our mailing list.

Why Maintain Your Septic System?

EPA Septic Smart Week is September 20-24, 2021

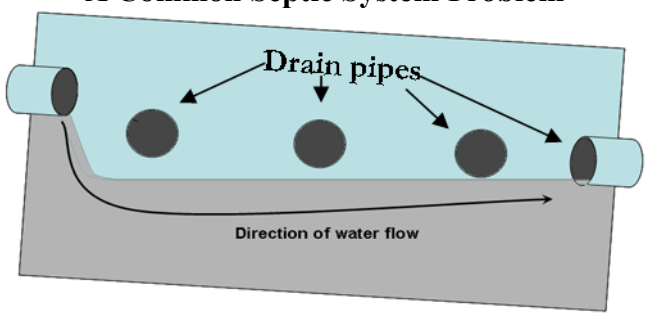
Well … it's simple. It helps keep you and your neighbors healthy, it helps protect your water supply, it's good for the environment and ultimately it saves you money. Regular maintenance fees of $250 to $500 every three to five years is a bargain compared to the cost of repairing or replacing a malfunctioning system, which can cost between $4,000 and $10,000 or more for a conventional system. Alternative systems cost even more, much more.

Household wastewater typically contains disease causing bacteria and viruses and high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus; and that's if you only flush what you're supposed to flush. If a septic system is well-maintained, working properly and used properly it will remove most of those pollutants. Insufficiently treated sewage from septic systems that aren't working properly and used properly can cause groundwater contamination, which can spread disease in humans and animals and if you're flushing down pharmaceuticals, cleaning agents, paint thinners etc. well guess what. Improperly treated sewage also poses the risk of contaminating nearby surface waters and watersheds.

Think about this: it is estimated that more than four billion gallons of wastewater are dispersed below the ground's surface every day. Yep … every day! Groundwater contaminated by the previously mentioned contaminants (viruses, bacteria, high levels of nutrients and all those other things you might flush away) does make its way to streams, ponds and lakes. It doesn't just disappear. Eventually it needs to get cleaned up. So … its so much easier to just BE SEPTIC SMART!

Continued on page 2

A Common Septic System Problem



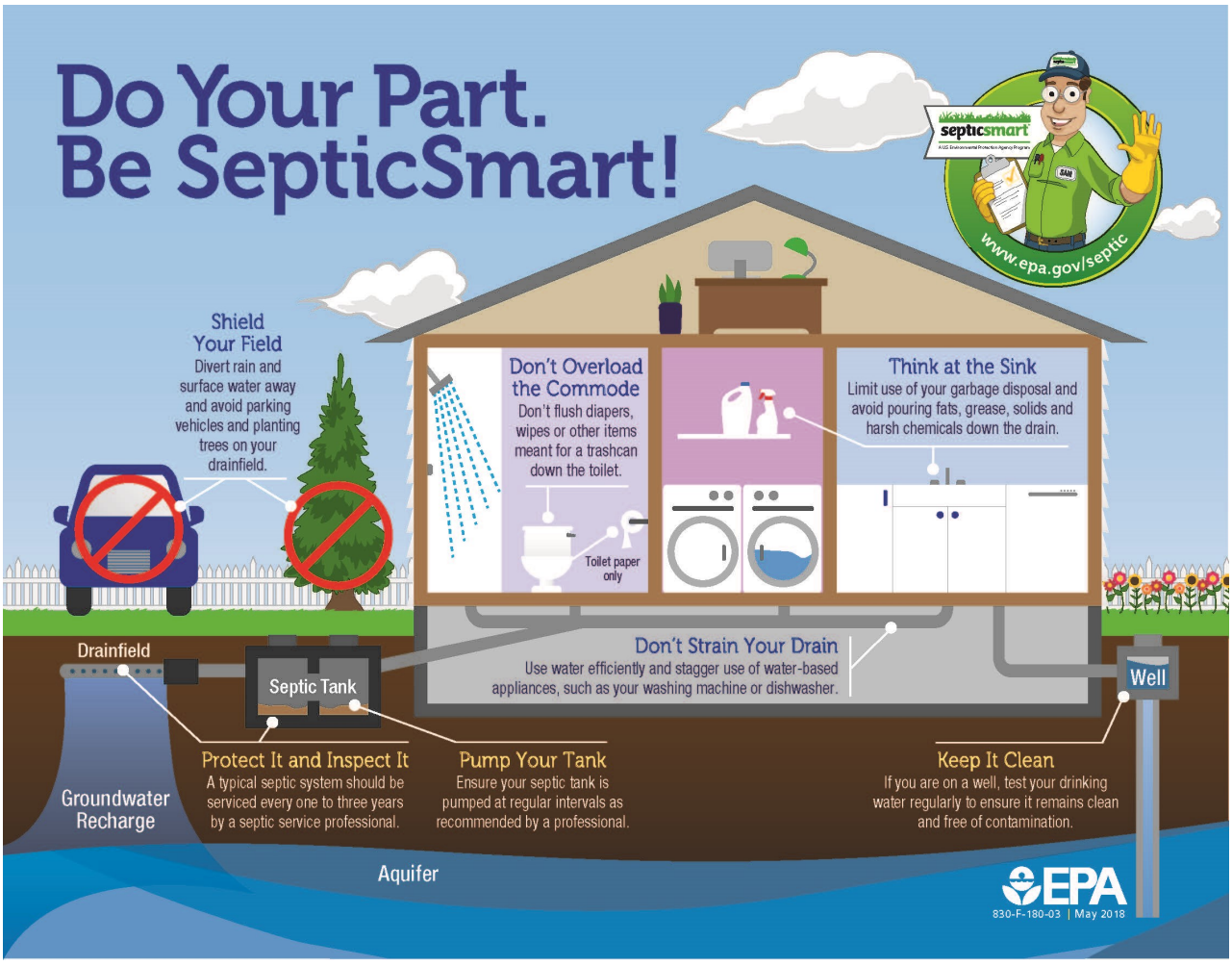
An unlevel distribution box forces all of the septic wastewater into 1 drain line. This causes the water to appear above ground because the soil is saturated.

Continued from page 1

How to Care for Your Septic Tank?

- **Inspect and pump frequently!** Four major factors influence the frequency of septic pumping: Household size; Total wastewater generated; Volume of solids in wastewater; and Septic tank size.
- **Use water Efficiently!** This includes high efficiency toilets and showerheads plus using your washing machine on the proper load size.
- **Properly dispose of waste!** Your septic system is not a trash can. An easy rule of thumb: Do not flush anything besides human waste and toilet paper. Never flush: cooking grease or oil; non-flushable wipes, such as baby wipes or other wet wipes; photographic solutions; feminine hygiene products; dental floss; diapers; cigarette butts; coffee grounds; cat litter; paper towels; pharmaceuticals and household chemicals like gasoline, oil, pesticides, antifreeze and paint or paint thinners.
- **Maintain your Drainfield!** Never park or drive on your drainfield! Don't plant trees where the roots can grow into your drainfield. Keep roof drains, sump pumps and other excess water away from your drainfield.

Take Back Unused Medications! You can bring unused medications, including pet medications, to your local CVS or Police/Sheriff's Department. The Annual National Prescription Take Back Day is Saturday October 23, 2021 from 10am to 2pm. Locations can be found here after October 1: National Prescription Drug Take Back Day (usdoj.gov).



Agriculture Cost Share Funds Available

Conservation funds for implementing conservation management practices are currently available. Now is a very good time to contact District staff to explore your options. Listed below are many of the commonly used conservation practices and payment rates.

Culpeper & Rappahannock (540-825-8591):

- David Massie; davidm@culpeperswcd.org
- Amanda McCullen; amandac@culpeperswcd.org
- Brandy Harris: brandyh@culpeperswcd.org

Greene, Madison & Orange:

- Kendall Dellinger: kendalld@culpeperswcd.org 540-825-8591 ext. 1008
- Spencer Yager: spencery@culpeperswcd.org 540-308-6301

Practice	Details
Grazing Land Management with Stream Exclusion	• Stream exclusion fencing & water development • Includes fence, well, water troughs, pipe, stream crossings, rotational fences, etc. • Covers 85% of *estimated* cost with 35' buffer & 100% with 50' buffer • Buffer payment rate of $80/acre/year paid upon installation of all practices • 10 and 15 year contracts available
Stream Exclusion with Narrow width buffer	• Stream exclusion fencing & water development with reduced setback • Includes fence, well, water troughs, pipe, stream crossings, rotational fence, etc. • Covers 60% of *estimated* cost with 10' buffer & 75% with 25/ buffer • 10 and 15 year contracts available
Small Herd Initiative	• New program which begins 7/1/21 that pays up to 100% for any stream exclusion project for farmers with less than 35 total head of cattle • $25,000 project limit • Contact the District for more details!
Afforestation of Crop, Hay & Pastureland	• 75% of eligible cost for planting trees (hardwood or conifers) • $100/acre for 10 year incentive & $150/acre for 15 years
Woodland Buffer Filter Area	• Planting trees in riparian areas • 95% of eligible cost for planting hardwoods or conifers • Conifers: $100/acre for 10 years OR $150/acre for 15 years • Hardwoods: $100/acre for 10 years OR $250/acre for 15 years
Cover Crops	• October 25th cut off for harvestable cover crop & early planting date for cover crops to be killed in the spring • November 15th, cut off planting date for kill down crops • Rates: $20/acre to harvest, up to $60/acre to kill & $30/acre for legumes
Nutrient Management Planning	• Up to $4/acre to have a nutrient management plan written for your farm • A great way to save money on input costs!
Precision Nutrient Management on Cropland	• Up to $8/acre for the precision application of nitrogen & phosphorus to cropland • Must have current nutrient management plan: provide records, maps & a bill for nutrient management
No-Till & Cropland Conversion	• Up to $70/acre to convert from conventional tillage to a no-till system for 5 years • Up to $410/acre to convert cropland to permanent hay or pasture; 10 or 15 year contracts available
Grassed Waterway, Grass Filter Strips & Critical Area Seeding	• Up to 75% to grade & seed gully erosion • Up to 75% to establish grass filter strips along waterways adjacent to crop, hayland or animal holding areas • Up to 75% to grade, fill & seed critically eroding areas
Continuing Conservation Initiative	• $0.50-$1.25/linear foot of stream bank protected with fencing • $250-$1,000 per water system, water trough or stream crossing • A great way to receive funds to maintain existing infrastructure!

It Pays to Install a Conservation Buffer

Your farm can benefit.

Your local Soil and Water Conservation District can help you qualify for funds that decrease the cost of installing conservation buffers on your farm. In addition, buffers also can benefit your bottom line by:

- Removing poorly drained land from cultivation.
- Reducing soil loss from wind and water erosion.
- Squaring off oddly shaped fields that are hard to work efficiently.
- Providing a long-term soil rental income.
- Establishing timber for future harvest.
- Leading to better herd health and weight gain when used with stream exclusion practices.

Money comes from the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program, which is carried out by conservation districts and administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

How and where they work.

Installing a forest or grass buffer between bodies of water and adjoining agricultural operations improves water quality by filtering — even treating — pollutants and by reducing soil erosion and sediment delivery. Buffers are particularly cost-effective when they are matched to your farm's site-specific needs. Some places to consider locating a buffer for both conservation and production benefits include:

- Seasonal wetlands and the borders of intermittent waterways.
- Eroding creek, stream and river banks.
- Streamside pastures, in combination with stream exclusion practices.

DCR
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

Here's the payoff.

In State Program Year 2022, the Virginia Cost-Share reimbursement rate is:

Up to 95% plus:
- Up to $150/acre for conifer buffers.
- Up to $250/acre for hardwood.
  These buffers are defined as trees, shrubs, herbaceous plantings and groundcover planted from the edge of a stream bank to a width of at least 35 feet but not more than 100 feet.

75% up to a maximum of:
- $100/acre for grass filter strips.
  These buffers are defined as permanent vegetative cover planted on cropland within 100 feet of a live or intermittent waterway and designed to filter sheet flow.

Other financial incentives from state and federal partners have increased in recent years. These include soil rental, buffer rentals through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and more. Farmers and landowners can experience net economic gains over the life of a buffer practice when they take advantage of all applicable programs.

Take the next step.

Conservation begins with your local Soil and Water Conservation District, which can help you apply for many different cost-share funding programs to help you implement conservation buffer best management practices. District staff also can identify other conservation programs for which you might qualify.

Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
540-825-8591
www.culpeperswcd.org

VIRGINIA'S SWCD SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

New to 2022 Tree Sale: Virginia Meadow Seed Mixes!!

By Richard Jacobs, CSWCD Conservation Specialist III

This limited item will provide customers with seed and instructions for 1,000 square feet (limited to 1 bag per customer)

Meadows provide ground cover that protects the soil and habitat for birds and pollinators. These benefits make meadows an important practice to conserve soil and protect clean water and provide wildlife habitat. For the 2022 tree sale, the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District is offering a meadow mix sample for small areas of your yard or adjacent areas.

What makes a meadow?

Meadows have a mix of warm-season grasses and forbs (i.e. wildflowers). A diverse mix is desired since each site is unique and some species may not grow as abundant as others. Diversity also ensures that something will be growing and blooming throughout the year and over the many stages of the meadow.

Meadows do have a life cycle in Virginia. Without periodic mowing or prescribed burns, a meadow will transition into a forest. Forests are the dominate land cover of Virginia, but grassland meadows can occur where there is disturbance such as fire, grazing and wind damage.

Choosing your site:

Sunny and dry areas are best. Shady and wet areas require a more diverse seed mix and require additional maintenance to control trees and shrubs. Meadows do well in poor soil as long as there is not excessive erosion or foot traffic.

Connecting the meadow with another habitat structure such as a pond, stream, forest, or rock pile will attract more wildlife.

Meadows can be any size. Starting from seeds you'll want to start with 1,000 square feet. You could start as small as 100 square feet with seeds or container plants.

Preparing the site:

If the site already has a good mix of native plants or you're not sure what lives there, just let it grow for a season or two. You may not need to seed the area.

When you have undesirable plants that smother the native plants, you'll want to remove them and prepare a seedbed. Removal methods vary depending on size and type of vegetation.

- Smothering with plastic tarp or cardboard covered with mulch or compost can be effective. Best for small areas covered with annual grasses.
- Using a double treatment of a non-selective herbicide such as Roundup® or Rodeo® is most common for thicker stands of vegetation. Herbicide should be applied following the label's instructions and never applied on a windy or rainy day.
- Tilling every two to four weeks for one to two month is a suitable alternative. Repeated tillage weakens the root systems of perennial plants.

After undesirable plants are controlled, the soil needs to be exposed for good soil/seed contact. Rake the dead thatch and grass clippings and rake to loosen up the soil.

Continued on page 15

The District carries nonwoven geotextile (filter fabric) for sale that meets most state and federally funded project requirements, as well as many on-farm needs. Geotextile is sold by the foot, which comes in 12.5' widths. Please call the Culpeper Office at 540-825-8591 for pricing and more information!

Employee Changes at the District

After nearly 18 years at Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District, Administrative Secretary JoAnn Neal retired in May 2021. She will spend her time in her garden and with her four grandchildren. We thank JoAnn for her dedicated service. (Photo left)

Stevie Ross joined the District in February 2021 as an Administrative Secretary. She grew up in Rappahannock County and studied Accounting in college. She has one daughter and together they enjoy soccer, gardening, and travel. (Photo center)

Brandy Harris joined the District in August 2021 as a Conservation Specialist. She grew up on a cattle and crop farm in Spotsylvania County on Lake Anna that has participated in various Best Management Practices. Growing up she participated in 4-H and FFA showing livestock and competing in livestock judging events. She achieved an Applied Agricultural Management degree from Virginia Tech in 2018 and plans on pursuing her Agribusiness Degree from the University of Tennessee next spring. She enjoys farming, traveling, and water skiing. (Photo right)

Pasture Management Opportunities to Reduce Stored Feed Costs

By David Massie, Conservation Specialist III

As feed costs continue to rise because of drought conditions and lower expected yields in much of the country, producers should look to long term pasture improvement to reduce stored winter feeding costs. Ensuring your grazing acres are at peak production is a good place to start. Growing more grass and managing it well can help increase per-acre beef production and allow the producer to extend the grazing season to capture additional lower cost forages.

A season long approach to pasture management is the best method to obtain success. Here are several tips to consider that can help maximize pasture productivity:

- Evaluate last year's successes and challenges and adjust grazing plans accordingly.
- Scout early and often. Catch small problems before they become larger headaches.
- Don't forget fertility. Fertilizing according to soil test can increase forage quantity and quality.
- Control broadleaf weeds early.
- Go gentle on drought-stressed areas. Feed hay if necessary to prevent overgrazing.

If you are interested in improving your pastures and forage quality, consider the Grazing Land Management practice (SL-10) offered by the District. The advantages of this practices are:

- facilitates rotational grazing and/or stockpiling forages
- improves forage diversity and resiliency to drought and wet periods
- protects local water quality
- applying soil amendments for plant and soil health
- control unwanted weed with herbicide treatments to promote forage growth

The Grazing Land Management practice assists with the development of a rotational grazing management plan. Following the plan helps ensure adequate surface cover, minimizes soil erosion and reduces sediment, nutrients, and pathogens in runoff. The cost share rate is **$25 per acre per year** over the three-year lifespan (for a **total of $75 per acre** which is paid upfront).

Stream exclusion fencing is required in eligible fields. Fields are only eligible for a one time payment. Contact Culpeper SWCD in Culpeper for more information at (540) 825-8591 or in Orange at (540) 308-6301.

More Quail per Bale: Making Precision Decisions for Your Crops

By Celia Vuocolo, Private Lands Biologist, Northeast Virginia, Quail Forever and Chaz Holt, Precision Agriculture & Conservation Specialist, Southeast Region, Quail Forever

Every producer has them; crop areas or even entire fields that just don't perform well no matter what you do. Sinking in a lot of time, effort and amendments into these unproductive or "red zones" can cost farmers some serious cash and can also negatively impact soil health and water quality. "We are working to help farmers turn these red acres green," says Chaz Holt, Quail Forever Precision Ag & Conservation Specialist. "I work one on one with farmers and show them that by taking these weaker areas out of production and putting them into habitat, they will increase their overall profitability immediately while improving the land for bobwhite quail and other wildlife."

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever's *Precision Conservation Initiative* was built to support farmers by helping them synthesize yield data, farm budget and spatial analyses into a plan that improves whole farm profit. "We can provide a full suite of profitability and conservation maps, alternative management comparisons, and a host of additional agronomic and sustainability solutions," says Chaz Holt. "And of course, restoring the southern traditions of quail habitat and increasing family farm sustainability are the driving force behind what we do." In Virginia, bobwhite quail have declined by an estimated 70% since the 1960s. Bobwhite populations are most impacted by habitat loss and fragmentation, and once thrived on a landscape of small farms with brushy fence lines, fallow areas and lightly grazed pastures. Embracing precision ag practices and taking advantage of state and federal cost-share programs can help get more habitat on the ground again in Virginia while improving producers' bottom line.

So, let's put this concept to work and crunch some numbers. Take this example scenario, taken from another region but the basic concepts are the same. A farmer has a 180-acre field with an average of approximately 5% as negative yield areas. Let's say that in this scenario, the farmer is growing cotton, which is selling at $0.80/lbs and irrigated production variable cost is $750/acre (fixed cost not included). Multiply 180 acres by $750/acre you'll end up with total variable input investment per year. The yield average is 2.5 bales (1200#) multiplied by $0.80/bale gives you a total ROI (return on investment) of 28%, which is not bad, but could be better. Additionally, you could use this same math but assume yield averages are 900#, and then you're closer to $0 ROI.

Here's the solution to improving the ROI of this field: put that 5%, which is the nine lowest yielding acres, at 450#/acre or less (which is costing the field -$390/acre or -52% ROI) into conservation. This removes the under-performing acres from the averages. The new acreage is now 171 acres, decreases total variable input investment per year substantially where it was usually lost. The new yield average has increased to 2.7 bales of cotton (1296#), which increases the ROI to 38%. This farmer is now inputting less money and getting a better return rate. And to top it off, as APH improves each year, you have lower risk on production and better land use efficiency.

If you're thinking about improving whole farm profit by converting marginal cropland to wildlife habitat, riparian or field buffers, there are both state and federal financial incentives that could also support your efforts. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office or Culpeper Soil & Water Conservation District to learn more about your options.

As stewards of the land and business owners, producers should have access to economical options as they work to increase whole farm profit. Quail Forever is a resource that can help you make those decisions. If you have questions, check out quailforever.org/precision ag or reach out to Chaz Holt at cholt@quailforever.org , 406-425-3039. For general questions about bobwhite quail and/or early successional habitat management, contact Celia Vuocolo at cvuocolo@quailforever.org or 908-797-7450.

WaterSense Products Help Reduce Water Usage

WaterSense is a voluntary partnership program sponsored by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is both a label for water-efficient products and a resource for helping you save water.

The WaterSense label makes it simple to find water-efficient products, new homes and programs that meet EPA's criteria for efficiency and performance. WaterSense-labeled products and services are certified to use at least 20 percent less water, save energy and perform as well as or better than regular models.

Water is a finite resource – even though about 70% of the Earth's surface is covered by water, less than 1% is available for human use. Despite the water supply and infrastructure challenges faced by many communities across the US, each American uses an average of 82 gallons of water each day at home.

Every drop counts:

- Bathrooms are the largest use of water in the home, using more than 50% of all indoor water.
- Approximately 5-10% of US homes have easy-to-fix leaks that drip away 90 gallons a day or more.
- Residential outdoor water use across the US accounts for nearly 8 billion gallons of water each day. mainly for landscape irrigation.
- On average, a urinal in a public place gets flushed 18 times per day.
- Heating water is typically the 2nd largest use of energy in a home (after space heating & cooling).
- Replacing showerheads with WaterSense- labeled models can save 4 gallons of water every time you take a shower.
- Replacing old, inefficient faucets and aerators with WaterSense-labeled models can save 700 gallons of water per year.
- Replacing a clock-based controller with a WaterSense labeled irrigation controller can save your home up to 15,000 gallons of water annually.
- WaterSense-labeled faucets—or aerators that can be installed on existing bathroom faucets—are about 30 percent more efficient than standard faucets while still providing sufficient flow.

Homes that earn the WaterSense label feature WaterSense-labeled plumbing fixtures, efficient hot water delivery, smart landscape design, and many other features to ensure that the home will save water for years to come.

For more information on WaterSense visit WaterSense | US EPA.

Our Annual Tree Sale Will Begin Accepting Orders in Late Fall! Do you have a tree species you would like us to include? Send suggestions to Stephanie DeNicola at stephanied@culpeperswcd.org.

Live Stakes: Using Live Cuttings to Propagate Shrubby Plants to Stabilize Stream Banks and Wet Areas

NOTE: This fall we will again include live stakes as part of the Culpeper District's Annual Tree Seedling Sale. Orders will be taken during the fall and winter for early Spring 2022 delivery. We include this article as an introduction to live staking.

Whether you have an eroding stream bank or want to restore a riparian area, consider planting with live stakes. Live staking is the practice of using unrooted cuttings to propagate shrubs and some trees for establishing vegetation in difficult riparian areas such as stream banks and floodplains. Using cuttings from dormant multi-stem shrubs and trees which have the capacity to grow roots once they are tapped or hammered into the ground.

There are specific species that are particularly well suited for this; these include the silky, gray or red osier dogwoods, various willow cultivars, buttonbush, arrowwood viburnums, elderberries and sycamores. These plants root easily from cuttings. The cuttings should be between 1/2 inch and 1.5 inches in diameter and between 18 and 24 inches long.

Cuttings are taken from the "parent" tree in the dormant season, usually 2 to 3 weeks before planting in the spring (February and March). Use your thumb to gauge the diameter of the cuttings and start at the base of the branch and then cut into shorter lengths of about 24 inches. Keep cuttings cool, moist and covered until planting.

Planting live stakes involves making sure the cutting has a sharp point to help with pushing or tapping into the ground. There needs to be at least one active bud above ground and the stakes need to be planted with the bud facing up. A push rod can be used to aid planting by making a pilot hole for cutting. The live stake needs to be as deep as possible, leaving the active bud near the surface. The bottom of the planted stake should be in the soil that remains constantly wet or nearly so. Space the cuttings about 1 to 2 feet apart, depending on the desired density.

Not all of the live stakes will survive. After 2 to 5 years you can always take more cuttings from the living to replant the bare areas. Good luck planting!

Other Resources:

Fetter, Jennifer & Koch, Kristen. Live Stakes for Stream Restoration. Penn State Extension. March 17, 2015. Accessed September 2021. https://extension.psu.edu/live-staking-for-stream-restoration

Davis, Ryan. Live Staking: A Trusty Technique for Planting Trees and Shrubs on the Cheap. Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Accessed September 2021 Live Staking: A Trusty Technique for Planting Trees and Shrubs on the Cheap - Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (allianceforthebay.org)

Below left: Stream Bank sloped, bench and toe planted with live stakes
Below right: 5 years of growth, live stake willows

College Scholarships and Summer Camps

Two students from the Culpeper District were each awarded $2,000 academic scholarships based on academic standing and demonstrated interest in conservation, leadership and involvement.

- **Rachel Weghorst** graduated from **Rappahannock County High School**. She will attend **the University of Virginia**, majoring in **Environmental Science**.
- **Katelyn Woolfrey** graduated from **Orange County High School**. She will attend **the University of Virginia** where she will major in **Biology**.

All of the students received high accolades from teachers and other mentors for contributions above and beyond the requirements of the high school curriculum.

Culpeper SWCD also sponsored Janaria Brooks, a homeschooled 9th grader in Orange, to attend the Virginia Academy of Natural Resources. This was a virtual summer camp coordinated by Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Department of Forestry.

Drinking Water Testing Clinic for Residential Wells

The Virginia Household Water Quality Program (VAHWQP) is a Virginia Cooperative Extension program that is designed to improve the water quality and health of Virginians using private water supplies. Initiated in 1989, VAHWQP drinking water clinics have been conducted in nearly every county across Virginia, and 35,000 samples have been analyzed and results confidentially returned to participants. The best part: your water test results are explained in a helpful meeting, where ways of preventing contamination and treating water quality problems are also addressed. Drinking water clinics are organized by your local Extension Agent and Virginia Tech faculty in the Biological Systems Engineering Department. ***Participation is voluntary and all information is kept strictly confidential***. Anyone with a private water supply system (including wells, springs, and cisterns) may participate.

The Virginia Well Owner Network (VWON) is a linked, capacity-building program. A group of Virginia Cooperative Extension agents and volunteers are trained in proper well construction and location, maintenance and protection of wells and springs, interpretation of water analysis, and water treatment options. The network is an excellent resource for homeowners.

Samples are analyzed for the following: iron, manganese, nitrate, lead, arsenic, fluoride, sulfate, pH, total dissolved solids, hardness, sodium, copper, total coliform bacteria and E. Coli bacteria. Confidential reports are easy to read and accompanied by a sheet explaining what the numbers mean.

The dates are:

- Pick up kits: October 4-12
- Drop off samples: October 13
- Results will be available via email around November 17

Residents and landowners in Greene, Madison and Orange are eligible for a clinic to test your well water. Contact Katie Jenkins at kjenk@vt.edu or 540-948-6881.

Culpeper SWCD is sponsoring this clinic to reduce the cost of the tests to $55.

Free Lawn Soil Tests Still Available!

Contact Stephanie DeNicola at stephanied@culpeperswcd.org for information.

Crop Producers Cover Crop Signup Alert – Planting Deadline Extensions

Interest in soil quality is at an all-time high for a variety of reasons. If you receive any farming magazines or publications, you have probably noticed an increase in articles about the importance of soil quality and the different methods to improve soils. Many articles discuss the benefits of no-till, while others focus on crop diversity and keeping the soil covered. This is where cover crops come into play. The benefits of cover crops are numerous – protecting the soil surface, erosion control, nutrient mining and sequestration, and improving soil tilth are just a few examples. If you are interested in experimenting with cover crops, or a long time grower of cover crops, you'll be interested to know that signup is currently underway with the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District for this falls cover crop program.

Significant changes to the planting date deadlines have been extended for both the nutrient management cover crop program (crop is killed down in the spring) and the harvestable cover crop program. Originally, the planting date deadlines were October 10th for harvestable cover crops and the early planting of nutrient management cover crops, while November 1st was the deadline for regular planting of nutrient management cover crops. The early planting date allows for bonus payments. **Now, all dates have been extended by two additional weeks.** The new deadline for harvestable cover crops and early planting of nutrient management cover crops is October 25th, while the new deadline for regular planting of nutrient management cover crops is November 15th.

According to many producers in the District, this is a significant improvement to the program and allows for greater flexibility for the producer at a busy time of year. Cover crop support payments are structured as follows; $20 per acre for harvestable cover crops; $20 per acre for nutrient management cover crops, plus options for additional $30 per acre for early planting of nutrient management cover crops and additional $10 per acre if the producer uses one of the select rye cultivars that have been identified as particularly good scavengers of nutrients.

All producers interested in signing up should contact:

Orange office:

- Spencer Yager at 540-308-6301 spencery@culpeperswcd.org
- Kendall Dellinger 540-825-8591 x 1009 kendalld@culpeperswcd.org

Culpeper office (540-825-8591):

- David Massie davidm@culpeperswcd.org
- Amanda McCullen amandac@culpeperswcd.org
- Brandy Harris brandyh@culpeperswcd.org

Meadows, continued from page 5

Seeding:

The best time to seed the meadow mix is October thru December along with a winter cover crop such as annual rye or a winter grain. This seeding scheme allows for the seeds to stratify over the winter to increase germination rates.

Seeding can also be done from April to July using a summer cover crop such as brown top millet, barley or buckwheat.

Spread seed mixture by hand or with a broadcast spreader at a rate of 1/2 pound per 1,000 square feet evenly over the site. Mix/scratch seed into the soil with the back of a rake, do not turn soil or bury seeds. Press seed into the soil by stomping with feet or rollers.

Watering of the seeds is not necessary. Meadow seeds will sprout and grow at their own pace.

Maintenance:

Remove invasive and undesirable species by hand or spot herbicide.

Mow once a year between November and March. March is preferred to provide winter cover for wildlife.

Mow high to leave about 4-6 inches of the plant stem uncut.

More specific instructions will accompany your seed order. Our packets will include the cover crop(s). If you would like to be alerted when we begin taking orders for the meadow mix, email Stephanie DeNicola at stephanied@culpeperswcd.org.

RAIN BARREL SALE!

Rain barrels are available! Prices are $75 for one and $140 for two. For more information, contact Stephanie DeNicola at 540-825-8591 or send an email to: stephanied@culpeperswcd.org.

HELP US CONSERVE PAPER! WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL? SEND AN E-MAIL TO STEPHANIED@CULPEPERSWCD.ORG.

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Views From The Foothills

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