

Views From The Foothills

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

Vol. 23 Issue 2
Spring 2023

M. Johnson

Inside This Issue

Ag Cost Share Practices

**Pond Management
Resources**

Free Lawn Soil Tests

Pharmaceutical Disposal

Drinking Water Clinic

**Emerald Ash Borer Cost
Share Program**

Virginia's Wildfires

New Landowner Update

0% Interest Loans

**Grazing manuals & Sticks
Available**

Road & Driveway Guide

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.

Virginia Fencing Law

Brad Jarvis, Extension Agent, Madison County

For centuries, fences have been used as a tool for preventing cattle or other domestic animals from going astray, as well as protecting landowners from unlawful encroachment. But there is another side to fences, one which Robert Frost's poem alludes to: "Good fences make good neighbors." With every fence comes a landowner on the other side, along with the potential for conflicting views and ideals. By this, fences have become both the cause and remedy for many disputes between neighbors.

In Virginia, conflicts between landowners are unlikely to diminish in the near future. Rural areas across the state are increasingly being subdivided and developed, bringing a mixture of agricultural, residential, and industrial uses together. In 1991, these mixed uses resulted in a fence dispute that was eventually brought before the Virginia Supreme Court. To avoid potentially damaging disputes between neighbors, each landowner should have a solid understanding of the body of law that defines your legal rights and responsibilities in fencing.

Fences are erected for many reasons. Typically, they serve to restrain the movements of animals or people across a given boundary. Sometimes a fence's primary purpose is to mark a boundary line. In the state of Virginia, localities have the authority to choose general guidelines for laws pertaining to boundary fences.

Some Virginia localities have chosen a fence law guideline that traces back to Virginia General Law laid down in the 18th century. In these counties, a landowner that does not wish to have a neighbor's livestock encroach upon their property is obligated to construct a fence sufficient to keep livestock out. These localities are known as "Fence-Out" counties. Other localities have chosen a fence law guideline that traces back to the English Common Law of the 17th century. In these counties, a landowner that keeps livestock is obligated to restrain the movements of his livestock by erecting a fence sufficient to keep them on their property. These localities are known as "Fence-In" counties.

In reality, the obligation to construct a fence is considerably more complicated than these two legal provisions suggest. A livestock owner that knowingly permits his livestock to enter a public road is very likely to be found negligent should the animals cause an accident, regardless of

Continued on page 3

Agricultural Cost Share Practices

Culpeper & Rappahannock (540) 825-8591

- David Massie davidm@culpeperswcd.org ext. 1004
- Amanda McCullen amandac@culpeperswcd.org ext. 1003 (on maternity leave until September 2023)
- Brandy Harris brandyh@culpeperswcd.org ext. 1008
- Lily Smith lilys@culpeperswcd.org ext. 1010

Green, Madison & Orange

- Kendall Dellinger kendalld@culpeperswcd.org ext. 1009
- Spencer Yager spencery@culpeperswcd.org ext. 1012

Practice	Details
Grazing Land Management with Stream Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream exclusion fencing & water development. Includes fence, well, water troughs, pipe, stream crossings, rotational fences, etc. Covers 85% of <i>estimated</i> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream exclusion fencing & water development with reduced setback. Includes fence, well, water troughs, pipe, stream crossings, rotational fence, etc. Covers 60% of <i>estimated</i> cost with 10' buffer & 75% with 25' buffer. 10 and 15 year contracts available.
Afforestation of Crop, Hay & Pastureland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Buffer payment rate of \$80/acre/year paid upon installation.
Cover Crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <i>Note: Dates have been extended by two weeks. Producer input led to this change!</i> Rates: \$20/acre to harvest, up to \$90/acre to kill & \$45/acre for legumes.
Nutrient Management Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 nitrogen/phosphorous application.
No-Till & Cropland Conversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
Sod Waterway, Grass Filter Strips & Critical Area Seeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 75% to grade & seed gully erosion. Up to 75% to establish grass filter strips along waterways adjacent to crop, hay-land or animal holding areas. <u>NEW! Buffer payment rate of \$80/acre/year paid upon installation.</u> Up to 75% to grade, fill & seed critically eroding areas.
Continuing Conservation Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$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!
Streambank Stabilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers 75% of the cost to stabilize &/or grade eroding streambanks on ag or forest-land Can also cover slope toe rip rap for protection (if required), vegetative planting, trees/shrubs Requires engineered design which is a reimbursable expense

Continued from page 1

whether the locality is “Fence-In” or “Fence-Out.” Furthermore, other sections of Code of Virginia pertaining to fences appear to supersede the “Fence-Out” or “Fence-In” law.

The type of fence constructed is dictated by the fence purpose and the consequences for the landowner should the fence fail will largely dictate what type of fence is appropriate. A lawful fence is defined in [Code §55-299 of the Code of Virginia](#). Practical, safe and functional fence designs and materials are available with a wide range of costs. New fence materials such as fixed-knot high tensile woven wire and high tensile electric fences can reduce the cost of effectively controlling livestock on farms. Electric fences are legal to have as boundary fences in Virginia provided the fence charger meets the standards laid out in the Code.

Once you start building fence, where should a property line fence be placed? The answer is “it depends,” but as a general rule the fence should be placed directly on the boundary line. There is generally no reason for a landowner to give up the use of any of their land by building a division fence inside the property line. Virginia case history does allow for reasonable levels of activity on ‘the neighbor’s side’ for the purposes of repairing or maintaining fences. Topography will be another factor that might affect where a fence is built. Where the property line is a stream or especially difficult terrain, neighbors often negotiate to ‘split-the-difference’ with the fence on one side of the obstacle for a given distance and then crossing over the boundary and covering a compensatory distance on the opposite side.

Who is responsible for building a fence in the State of Virginia is the “\$64,000-question?” The answer is, “It depends!” The Code of Virginia draws a distinction between a newly constructed fence and a pre-existing fence. In some cases, a landowner wishing to construct or repair a division fence can compel their neighbor to cover half the cost of the fence. The clearest situation justifying such an arrangement is where two adjoining landowners both have livestock but the extent to which a fence must be repaired or the type of fence to be constructed is still a possible source of disagreement. The duty to pay half the cost becomes less certain when one of the landowners does not keep livestock. See [Code of Virginia §55-317](#) and [§55-319](#) to see some of the distinctions that the law attempts to draw. Interestingly, Virginia fence law refers only to landowners. The Code does not mention ‘tenants’ or ‘owners of livestock.’ This has very real implications for landowners who lease land to farmers with an understanding that the farmer-tenant maintains all fences. Landowners should be aware of their potential obligations and liability related to maintaining boundary fences.

In those cases where no division fence has been built, either of the adjoining owners may notify and must file with the County Clerk’s office in writing of their plans and intention to build a division fence. After receiving this notification, the adjoining landowner has the option to help build the fence or within ten days to notify his neighbor of his intention to allow his land to lie open. If the adjoining landowner chooses to let his land lie open, then the builder of the fence must do so at his own expense. In the future, however, if the adjoining landowner decides to enclose his own property and consequently take advantage of the division fence built by his neighbor, he will become liable for one-half the cost of that division fence. It is important for the adjoining landowner to remember to notify his neighbor if he intends to let his land lie open. If he fails to do so and does not come forward within 30 days to build his half of the fence, then he will become liable for one-half of the cost of that division fence. After the fence has been built, it becomes from that point forward a division fence between the lands of the neighbors.

Continued on page 6

Pond Management Resources

Listed below is a series of resources the District calls to your attention that can assist landowners in making informed decisions or informed purchases regarding the management of their ponds. This by no means is meant to be an exhaustive list but a good place to begin to get answers to your questions and understand many of the options available to you. District staff are available to assist you with understanding many pond management situations and assist you with understanding the pros and cons of management decisions you may be contemplating. In addition, one of the publications has a robust list of pond management consultants you may wish to engage. As a public entity, the District does not endorse any of them but help circulate the consultant list as a service to landowners.

A very good place to start is the publication **Private Pond Management** from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. It includes weed identification and control options, pond renovation, fish stocking and management, habitat management and more. It also has the list of consultants referenced above. In our opinion, this publication get two thumbs up! <https://dwr.virginia.gov/fishing/private-pond-management/>

Next on the list of resources to be aware of are 3 publications from Virginia Tech. We let them speak for themselves.

- **Control Methods for Aquatic Plants in Ponds and Lakes** https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/48945/420-251_pdf.pdf
- **Clearing Muddy Pond Waters** https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/420/420-250/420-250_pdf.pdf
- **Liming Acidified lakes and Ponds** <https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/5435/635901078579970000>

You may also want to be aware of the following publication from North Carolina State University. It covers a lot of additional useful information: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/pond-management-guide>.

Now if you are considering building a pond you should be aware of the following publications.

- <https://nrcspad.sc.egov.usda.gov/DistributionCenter/pdf.aspx?productID=115>
- <http://www.culpeperswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Pond-Planning-brochure-2020.pdf>

You should also be aware of any permitting or other regulatory requirements at the local, state and/or federal levels. A good place to start is to contact the US Army Corps of Engineers and your County government. And of course, it's always good to consider your off-site impacts on neighbors and downstream, particularly during construction or during a high magnitude storm event.

And one final note lest you may have read this before and forgotten;...click [here](#) for a link to our previous pond article.



Save Money with Soil Testing to Improve Your Lawn

Caring for the environment also means caring for your lawn. By using proper mowing and maintenance practices, you can enjoy a healthy, beautiful lawn while protecting local streams, rivers and lakes.

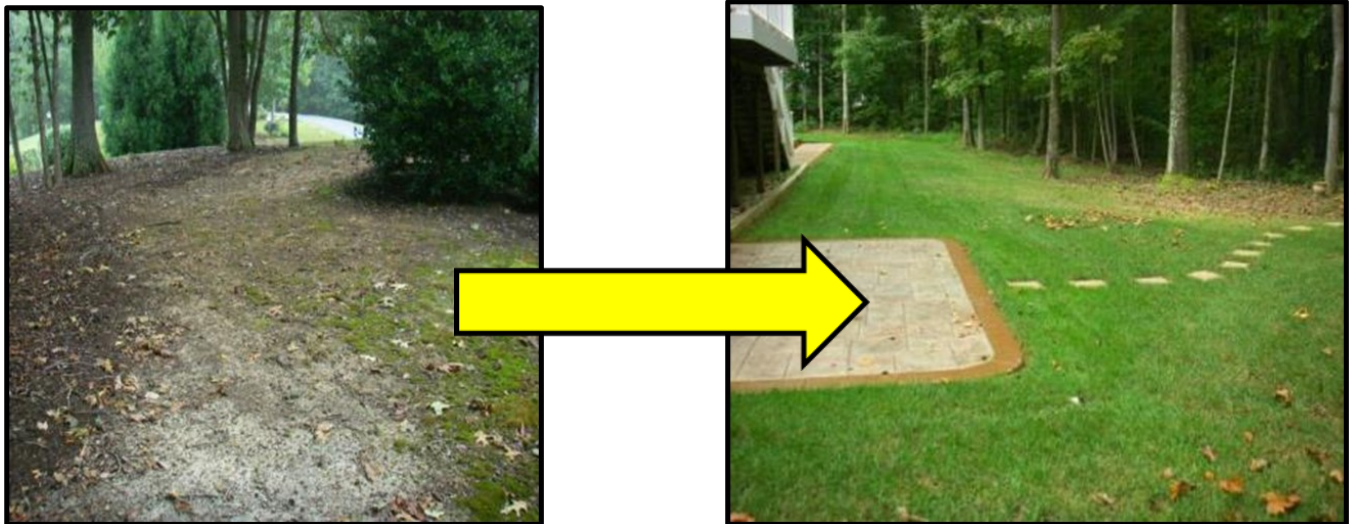
Our homes contain impervious surfaces (rooftop, patio, and driveway) that can't absorb and filter rainfall. The underlying soil characteristics of the lawn can affect how the lawn absorbs and filter the impervious runoff. Soil compaction, low pH (e.g. acid soils) and low nutrients can impact how you grow vegetation in your lawn. Improperly applied or excess fertilizer and other chemicals are not retained in the landscape, and can contribute to harmful algal blooms and other water quality problems.

What is lawn care? It's not just seeding, watering and mowing. We must amend the soil not only to feed the grass but to improve soil structure. Managing clippings and leaves are all part of lawn care too. Returning these byproducts improve the soil and vegetation. How we care for our lawn determines the degree of the environmental benefits and impacts we achieve.

Healthy lawns can help prevent erosion, reduce runoff, and filter rainwater. A healthy lawn has uniform and mature vegetation that inhibits erosion and retains nutrients. A healthy lawn can capture over an inch of rain; traps dust and dirt; convert carbon dioxide to oxygen; and reduces the heat island effect with air temperatures up to 30 degrees cooler than pavement. A sparse lawn with bare soil needs improvement either by amending the soil or selecting different landscape plants.

The soil should be tested every three years. A composite soil sample of the whole yard is collected. A soil test includes information on the amount of nutrients, organic matter and pH level. The proper balance is essential to a healthy lawn. Additional assessments of patchy bare spots could be done to verify foot traffic, recent disturbance, disease or standing water.

The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District is working with your local Extension agent to make sure homeowners like yourself have the knowledge and resources to do your part. The District is offering a voucher to cover the cost of the soil test. For these vouchers please contact the District at 540-825-8591 or stephanieD@culpeperswcd.org. For more information on lawn care see the Virginia Extension Publication list: https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/tags.resource.html?tag=pubs_ext_vt_edu:lawns.



New Landowner Update

Last fall, Culpeper SWCD hosted a New Landowner Workshop at Graves Mountain Lodge on September 16. Nearly 100 people were in attendance. In preparation for the workshop CSWCD produced a binder for new landowners. If you would like to see the binder contents given to attendees, visit our website at: [New Landowner Binder - Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District \(culpeperswcd.org\)](https://www.culpeperswcd.org).

The District plans to hold this event each September.

Continued from page 3

Virginia's division fence statute is unique, because there are exceptions to the option of letting one's land lie open. Generally, Virginia fence law requires all owners of adjoining land to build and maintain division fences, at joint and equal expenses, unless other wise agreed upon. However, there is within this law a special provision that recently has been a point of contention. The provision allows some agricultural landowners to be exempt from the fencing cost if they chose to let their land lie open. However, this fencing cost exemption is not extended to landowners that use their property for commercial or industrial purposes or subdivide their property into lots or parcels that adjoin land devoted to agricultural uses. Specifically, if an adjoining landowner does not use his land for agricultural purposes, then they may not choose to allow their land to lie open and are automatically required to pay for half of the division fence's construction costs.


The history and interpretation of Virginia Fence Law can be both fascinating and complex. It is important that, where boundary fences are concerned, landowners understand their obligations. A "lawful fence" is critically important for enforcement of any of the Virginia Fence related laws. And fence maintenance agreements between adjoining landowners should be filed with the County Clerk's office in the jurisdiction of the fence location. A properly filed fence agreement is a binding contract for successive generations and landowners.

ELECTRICITY TOO FAR AWAY?

WE CAN DESIGN GRAVITY FLOW TYPE TROUGHS FROM SPRINGS AND PONDS.

THESE TYPE OF SYSTEMS ARE SITE SPECIFIC.

DO NOT LET THE WORRY OF HAVING NO ELECTRICITY KEEP YOU FROM SIGNING UP!



WWW.CULPEPERSWCD.ORG
540-825-8591

Virginia's Prescription Drug Take Back Program

Drug Take Back Program (state.va.us)

Virginia's statewide Drug Take-Back Day is an effort to prevent prescription drug abuse and to keep trace drugs out of our lakes and streams. In communities all across the Commonwealth, it is a day where citizens can drop off their unused, unwanted, or expired medications at their local law enforcement agencies for safe disposal.

The Office of the Attorney General, the Secretary of Public Safety, the Virginia State Police, and local law enforcement agencies worked together to participate in this nationwide U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's National Take-Back Day.

Drug Take-Back Day is a day where citizens can drop off their unused, unwanted, or expired medications **at their local law enforcement agencies** for safe disposal.

Drug Take-Back Day is an effort to prevent prescription drug abuse and to keep trace drugs out of our lakes and streams (wastewater treatment plants cannot remove many compounds found in medications; so when flushed or put in a landfill, drugs are discharged into our surface and ground water and consumed by fish and wildlife).

- **It's anonymous and free**
- **Prescription and over-the-counter medications will be accepted**
- **Please, no intravenous solutions, injectables, or needles**

Why are drug take-back programs important?

Take-back programs are the safest method for disposing of prescription drugs because they are organized and closely monitored by local, state, and federal government agencies. These agencies ensure the proper disposal of the drugs in accordance with federal law.

The dangers of not properly disposing of prescription drugs

A growing concern across the Commonwealth is prescription medications being taken from medicine cabinets or the trash by those who abuse drugs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2006, nearly seven million Americans over the age of 12 reported abusing prescription medications. In fact, approximately 60 percent of people who abuse prescription painkillers indicate that they obtained the prescription drugs from friends or relatives for free, often taking the drugs without permission.

Children or pets may ingest undisposed or improperly disposed medications. This can lead to overdose, injury, and even death.

Many people believe that flushing or simply throwing away drugs is the best way to dispose of medications, however, if not disposed of properly, the drugs can contaminate the groundwater and waterways. Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove or process many compounds found in medications. Instead, when flushed or disposed in the ground, the drugs can be discharged into our surface and ground water.

Pharmaceutical contaminants in water have been shown to cause serious harm to fish and wildlife living in and near rivers and lakes. Humans can also be exposed to these chemicals when they drink water drawn from contaminated bodies of water or eat wild game or fish. The long-term human health risks from exposure to even very small amounts of these chemicals is not yet known.

Annually the National Prescription Take Back Day was April 22. However, year-round prescriptions can be turned into the pharmacy at any CVS, Safeway in Culpeper, Town of Culpeper Police Department and Greene, Madison and Rappahannock County Sheriff's Offices.

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 by evaluating 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 local date for Culpeper and Rappahannock is July 19. The date for Greene, Madison & Orange is September 27.

- Culpeper: Linda Baldwin at lindab75@vt.edu or 540-727-3435 x353
- Greene: Sarah Sharpe, seweaver@vt.edu or 434-985-5236
- Madison: Brad Jarvis at bjarvis@vt.edu or 540-948-6881
- Orange: Clare Lillard at lclare4@vt.edu or 540-672-1361
- Rappahannock: Linda Baldwin at lindab75@vt.edu or 540-727-3435 x353

Culpeper SWCD regionally sponsors these clinics to help reduce the cost of the tests for participants.

It is our understanding that in Culpeper and Rappahannock Counties there may be additional opportunities for low income households.

Since 2006, 510 samples in the Culpeper District have been tested, covering over 850 people.

Your Guide to Safe Well Water

www.wellwater.bse.vt.edu/resources.php

1. Make sure your well is properly constructed.
2. The ground should slope away from your well to prevent surface water pooling.
3. Ensure your well is at least 100 feet away from potential contamination sources.
4. Keep the area around your well clean and accessible.
5. Have your water tested once a year for total coliform bacteria. Test for pH and total dissolved solids every three years.
6. All water tests should be conducted by a certified lab.
7. Inspect your well annually.
8. Keep careful records of installation, maintenance, inspections and all water tests.
9. If a well on your property is no longer in use have it properly abandoned.
10. If you have a spring instead of a well make sure the spring box is sealed to prevent contamination.

Emerald Ash Borer Cost-Share Program Cost Assistance for Protecting Ash Trees

Applications are now open for the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) Emerald Ash Borer Cost-Share Program, which offers cost reimbursement for treating ash trees to protect from the invasive emerald ash borer. Landowners and organizations (including municipalities, not-for-profits, educational institutions and homeowner associations) can apply until June 16.

The cost share reimburses up to 50% of the costs for emamectin benzoate insecticide trunk injections by a certified applicator, up to \$1,250 per landowner or \$5,000 per organization.

To be eligible, treatments must be for green, white, black, blue, pumpkin, or Carolina ash trees at least 12 inches in diameter at chest height. A DOF forester must assess trees prior to treatment to be considered for cost share funds.

The emerald ash borer is the most destructive forest insect ever to invade the U.S., having killed hundreds of millions of ash trees. This cost-share program aims to safeguard the future of Virginia's ash resource by making treatments more affordable and getting more trees treated. When applied correctly, emamectin benzoate treatments are effective at protecting ash trees from emerald ash borer for up to three years and can save landowners the cost of removing dead ash trees.

"If you have an ash tree you love, now is the time to treat it," said DOF Forest Health Technician Amanda Conrad. "Waiting until you see a problem could mean it's already too late."

To get started protecting your ash trees, [contact your DOF forester](#), or learn more about this cost-share program by visiting DOF's [website](#). If interested in applying, follow this [link](#) for program information and application. If you have any questions, contact Program Administrator Amanda Conrad at amanda.conrad@dof.virginia.gov.

About the Virginia Department of Forestry

The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$23 billion annually.

Headquartered in Charlottesville, the agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. DOF is an equal opportunity provider.



Emerald Ash Borer (photo courtesy of VDOF)

**MAKING YOUR
VISION COME
TRUE IS WHAT WE DO.
EST. 2016**

Specializing in all phases of excavation



Specializing in all phase of tree service

LICENSED & INSURED

- LIME
- PONDS
- GRADING
- DITCHING
- DRIVEWAYS
- FERTILIZING
- BASEMENTS
- LOT CLEARING
- BUSH HOGGING
- TREE SERVICES
- EQUESTRIAN ARENAS

(540)-522-2760

 VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

PO'CRITTER FARM & LUMBER

Offering kiln-dried lumber, including:

- Walnut
- Cherry
- Yellow Poplar
- Red Oak
- White Oak
- Maple
- Ash
- Cedar
- American Chestnut
- ... and more.

A branch of CFS, LLC, <https://cfs-llc.weebly.com/>

540-718-3673

Custom kiln-drying services also available

Sources of lumber include local, family-owned
Virginia sawmills.

Small Farm Outreach

The Small Farm Outreach Program (SFOP), a part of Cooperative Extension at Virginia State University, educates and empowers small, limited-resource, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers to own, operate and sustain farms and ranches independently with agricultural training programs that improve farm management skills and quality of life.

For more information, visit <https://www.ext.vsu.edu/small-farm-outreach-program>.

Virginia's Wildfires

By: Ed Furlow, VDOF Area Forester/Forest Warden

Another Virginia Spring Wildfire Season just ended. This was my seventeenth season, swapping work duties between the role of forester to that of Forest Warden and wildland fire fighter. The Department of Forestry was established 1914 to do just this- to extinguish wildfires on private lands. My role as Forest Warden is to enforce Virginia's fire laws, including the seasonal 4pm Burn Law.

Wildland firefighting is a group effort. It's rare for me to show up to a fire before the local fire department has already started suppression activities. When they can't control or contain a wildfire, I have a bulldozer that does just that. When the land gets steep and rocky, I have a part-time firefighter resource to help me extinguish the fire the hard way, by hand. Chasing outdoors fires is exciting and dangerous, and we take the job seriously.

Unlike the infamous western wildfires that we see on tv during the summer months, we typically experience most of our wildfires when our hardwood trees lose their leaves. Many a large fire are fought on mountainous terrain, but even in the Piedmont and Coastal plain fires can be severe and numerous. With cool, low humidity weather, wildfires can spread rapidly through dormant fields, residential yards, pine plantations, hardwood forests, and bottomlands.

Nearly all wildfires in Virginia are human caused. Just about every holiday, weekend, and even Tax Day, a wildfire is started by someone accidentally or negligently. If you are not sure about wildfire danger, check your phone weather app for enhanced fire threat or red flag days, watch the morning news to check for the daily forecast, or check the DOF webpage for daily wildfire conditions. I would even prefer you call me if you are unsure about burning. Common courtesy dictates you call your local non-emergency EMS number and notify them of your controlled burn. They will also inform you of any county fire laws or current burn restrictions. Quick fact: Did you know it's illegal to burn tires or other hazardous material?

Not all outdoor fires are out of control. Fire is used by local farmers, military bases, wildlife biologists, and foresters: The goals of a prescribed fire can be many. Professional resource managers use fire as a management tool; most are Certified Prescribed Burn Managers through a DOF training course. More information about this subject can be found on the Virginia Prescribed Fire Council website.

Basically, what I'm trying to say is, "If you have to conduct an outdoor fire in Virginia, wait until the summer months." Wait until the grass is growing, the forest has leafed-out, the wind has died down, the humidity is not too low, and don't burn during a drought. To ensure your fire is completely extinguished, Smokey Bear teaches us to stir our fire's ashes with water and his message is, "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires."

For more information visit [here](#).



New Forester Assignments (effective 5/11/2023):

Culpeper & Rappahannock: Peter Schoderbek 434-282-4169 peter.schoderbek@dof.virginia.gov

Greene & Madison: Ed Furlow 540-395-1164 ed.furlow@dof.virginia.gov

Orange: Stuart Baker 434-987-8326 stuart.baker@dof.virginia.gov

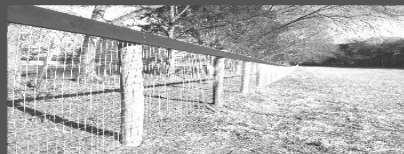
Backyard Conservation Funds Available

By Richard Jacobs, III, PE, CSWCD Conservation Specialist III

Conserving water while using attractive gardening and landscaping practices beautifies your yard, attracts beneficial pollinators, adds curb appeal and also helps improve the environment by reducing the amount of storm water runoff from your property. Creative management of those small areas of your front or backyard to address problem areas (too wet, too dry, doesn't drain, won't grow grass, etc...) now has funding available to support simple, on the ground landscape practices that benefit both you and the local environment. The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program or VCAP provides financial assistance to residential, institutional and commercial property owners to implement such practices. Payment rates vary among the practices but generally are focused on providing up to 80 percent of the cost. The district will provide technical resources for your planning efforts and visit your site to better understand what you hope to achieve. For more information on VCAP visit <http://vaswcd.org/vcap> or contact the District at 540-825-8591 or richardj@culpeperswcd.org

0% Interest Loans Available

Are you interested in conservation practices but do not have the money upfront to fund the project? No worries. Department of Environmental Quality's Ag BMP Loan Program offers funds for you with no money upfront with 0% interest, no long-term requirement, and potential for principal forgiveness. Fortunate for you, projects are accepted year-round and reviewed monthly. Debt repayment begins 6 months after project completion with 1-to-10-year repayment schedules depending on loan amount and asset useful life. DEQ will prioritize applications and tentative authorization will be granted. Contact DEQ today to find out if you're eligible. See page 13.



VIRGINIA FENCE COMPANY

- LIVESTOCK FENCING
- WATER SYSTEMS
- POLE BARNs

NICK HILL (540) 718-2108



VirginiaFence.com

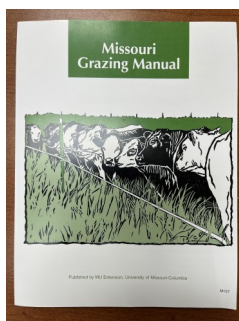
Missouri Grazing Manual Available

By David H. Massie, CSWCD Conservation Specialist III

The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District has copies of the Missouri Grazing Manual available to producers interested in expanding their grazing knowledge. This grazing manual encompasses so many different aspects of grazing management – soils, plant growth, nutrient cycling, water system and fence layout, grazer's arithmetic, and economics of grazing. This manual also brings together different groups of researchers, educators, and producers with broad experience in land management, forage, and livestock systems to provide a comprehensive guide to understanding and managing grassland ecosystems.

This manual will assist producers with furthering their knowledge of grazing management and provide more detailed, specific information they will need to enhance their grazing techniques. Jim Gerrish, a nationally recognized, well-respected grazer, is one of the key contributors and editors of this manual. His background in agronomy, as well as forage management and research, adds an unparalleled perspective which is useful for the beginning grazer as well as the seasoned grazer.

The distribution of these manuals will be on a first come, first serve basis. We also have pasture grazing sticks for sale for \$5 each. Pasture grazing sticks are a great tool for helping producers “train their eyes” to the amount of forage available for their livestock. A two page instruction manual comes with the pasture grazing stick, and District Staff will be happy to assist using this valuable tools on your farm.



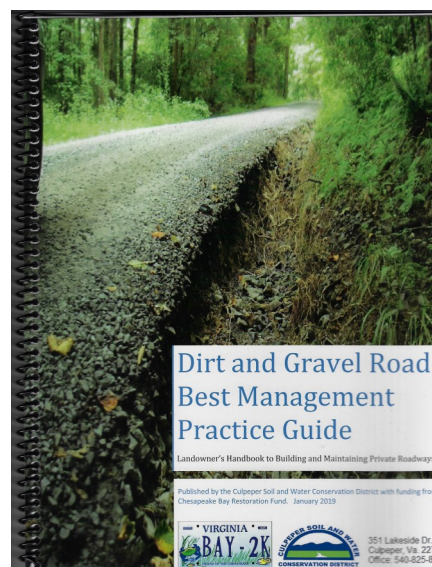
Courtesy of South Dakota State
University Extension



Road and Driveway Maintenance Guide Available

Spring is a great time to start maintenance of your road or driveway! Over time, many roads and driveways deteriorate for a variety of reasons: poor initial design or construction, poor maintenance, extreme weather or heavy traffic. In addition to costly repairs, many roads and roadside ditches drain into local streams delivering both sediment and gravel into stream channels. This is destructive to the stream, resulting in loss of stream bottom habitat and channel capacity. Improved maintenance incorporating best management practices (BMPs) can save money and better protect waterways.

Currently available to property owners is the Dirt and Gravel Road BMP Guide, published with funding from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund. The guide can be found at the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District website (www.culpeperswcd.org) under Publications. Hard copies can be picked up from CSWCD as well as your local Extension office or Building office. For technical assistance, contact Richard Jacobs at 540-825-8591 or RichardJ@culpeperswcd.org.



Be Septic Smart — Think at the Sink!

One in five US homes have septic systems. Yours may be one of them. If your septic system is not properly maintained you may be risking your family's health, hurting the environment and flushing thousands of dollars down the drain. Septic Smart is a program developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to educate homeowners about septic system maintenance.

- **Think at the Sink!** What goes down your drain has a big impact on your septic system! Avoid harsh chemicals and use cleaners/detergents in moderation.
- **Don't strain your drain!** Use water efficiently and stagger use of water based appliances (such as washing machines and dishwashers) to avoid a back up of your septic system into your house.
- **Keep it clean!** If you have a well, many things can contaminate your drinking water, such as a failing septic system. Test your well water regularly!
- **Shield your field!** Tree and shrub roots, cars and livestock can damage your drainfield.
- **Protect it and Inspect It!** Regular septic system maintenance can save homeowners thousands of dollars and protect public health.
- **Don't Overload the Commode!** A toilet is NOT a trash can! Disposable diapers, wipes, feminine hygiene products, cigarette butts, cat litter and more can damage your septic system.
- **Pump your Tank!** Ensure your septic tank is pumped at regular intervals as recommended by a professional and/or local permitting authority.

More information can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/septic/>.



Specialist In Soil & Water Conservation Fence

JR Landrum Fence

F

jrlandrum1111@yahoo.com



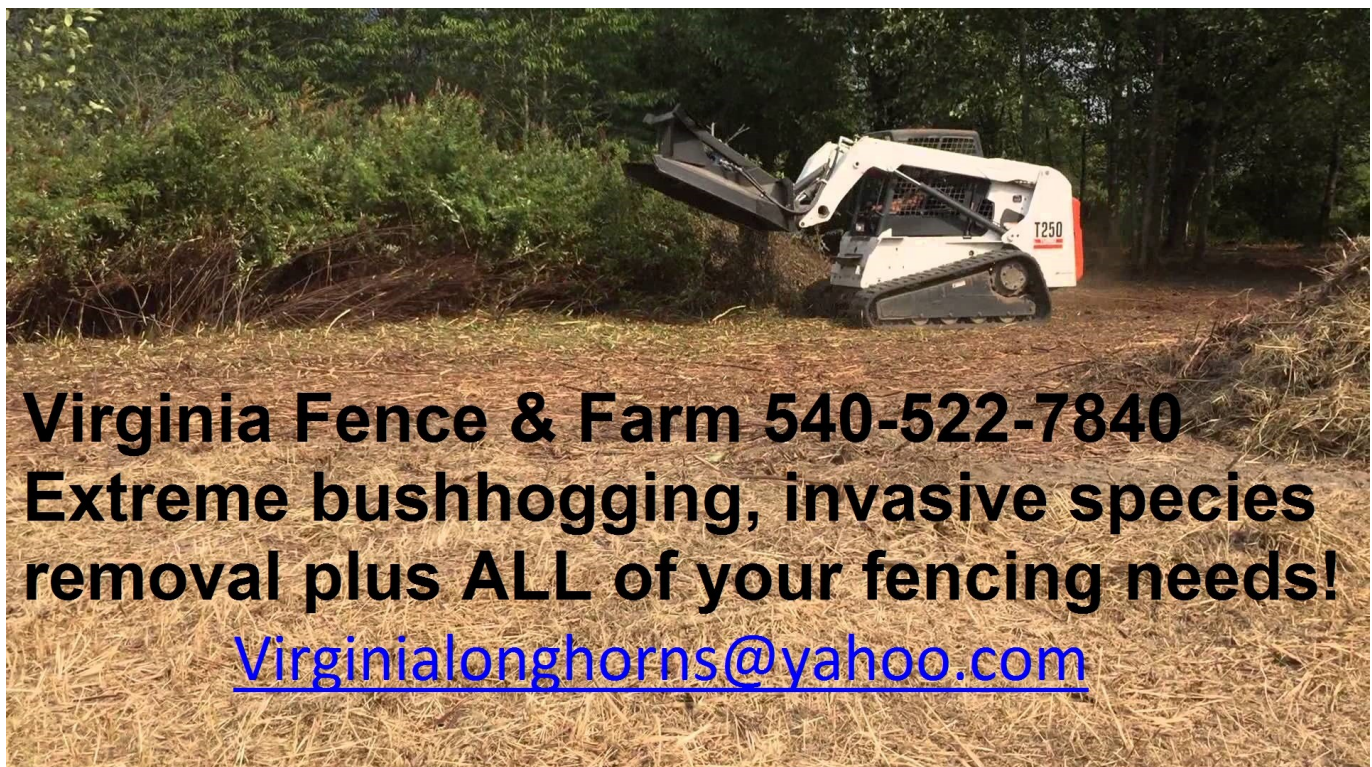
J.R. LANDRUM

Fence Work
Fence Staining
Tree Work
Power Washing

Office: 540-948-6013



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!



Virginia Fence & Farm 540-522-7840
Extreme bushhogging, invasive species removal plus ALL of your fencing needs!
Virginalonghorns@yahoo.com



***Developing strategies to help
your land work for you!***

Environmental Land-Use Planning
Environmental Resource Inventory
Stream / Wetland Banking and Restoration
Environmental Permitting
Conservation Easement Support
Lakes, Ponds, and Dams
Forestry Services

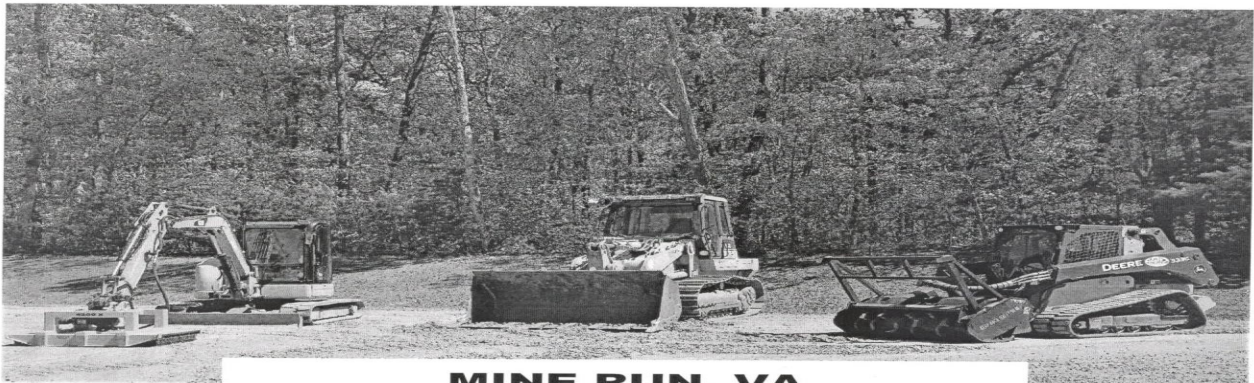
Call Brian Hawley, PWS for more details.
540.785.5544



www.stantec.com



COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL SITE WORK
FORESTRY MULCHING ROADS & BUILDING PADS
BOOM MOWING



MINE RUN, VA
OFFICE: 540-854-7233
JPTUCKEREXCAVATING.COM



Livestock Water Troughs

Stream Crossings

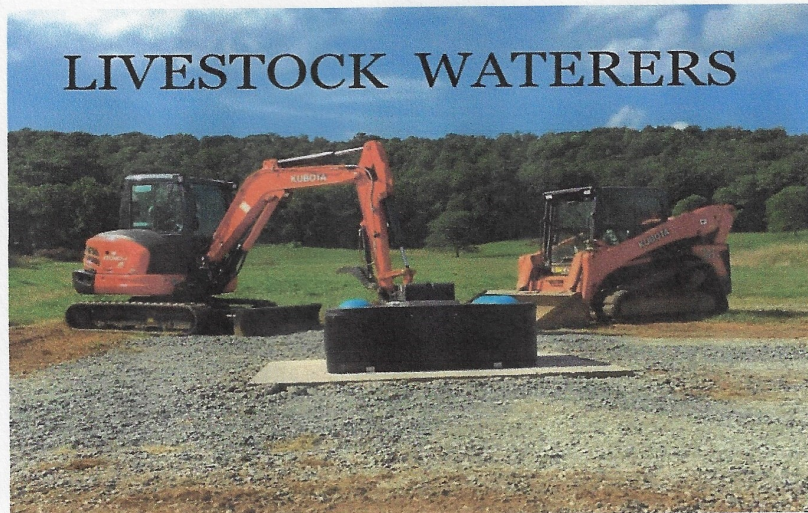
**Well Pump & Pressure
Tank Installation**

Shelters

Residential Trenching

**Water & Sewer Line
Repair**

Culvert Pipe Installation



LIVESTOCK WATERERS

RANDYHOVEYCONSTRUCTIONLLC



FORESTRY MULCHING

Land Clearing

Wildlife Food Plots

**Recreational Trail
Clearing**

Habitat Restoration

Pond Restoration

Reclaim Pastures

Forestry Mulching is the perfect way to clean up your property, without leaving any stump holes or brush piles behind. This process also leaves a mulch bed that helps prevent erosion and replenishes nitrogen into the soil.

RANDYHOVEYCONSTRUCTIONLLC



The Balance of Your Aquatic Ecosystem

Is Our Top Priority.

When it comes to lake, stormwater pond and fisheries management, sustainability is essential. You have to incorporate the right strategies, invest in the best solutions and strike the perfect ecological balance to ensure the long-term health and beauty of your aquatic ecosystems.

Download *"Your Guide To Sustainable Pond Algae And Aquatic Weed Control."*



Visit solitudelakemanagement.com/balance

Restoring Balance. Enhancing Beauty.

SOLITUDE
LAKE MANAGEMENT

888.480.LAKE • solitudelakemanagement.com

Pace Fence & Livestock Co.

Quality fence construction of all types. Fully insured and all work guaranteed against defects in craftsmanship for a year following installation. Priced right, done right.

**Unionville, Va. 22567
540-854-5194**

RAIN BARREL SALE!

A new order of rain barrels are have arrived! Prices are \$90 for one and \$175 for two plus sales tax. 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.**



Printed on recycled paper.

Views From The Foothills

Published Seasonally By
Culpeper Soil & Water Conservation District

Stephanie Rose DeNicola, Editor

Culpeper Office
351 Lakeside Drive
Culpeper, Virginia 22701
540-825-8591
540-645-6624 (F)

Orange Office
325-B Madison Road
Orange, Virginia 22960
540-825-8591

Board of Directors

Culpeper County

Thomas O'Halloran, Treasurer
Dennis Verhoff
Bob Williamson, Associate Director

Madison County

Lynn Graves, Chair
Stephen Hill
L. Brad Jarvis, Associate Director

Greene County

Philip C. Morris, Vice-Chair
Robert Runkle
Steve Morris, At-Large
Sarah Weaver Sharpe, Ext. Agent, At-Large

Orange County

Robert Bradford
J. Robert Brame III
Warren Lee, Associate Director

Rappahannock County

Mike Biniek
Mike Sands

District Staff

Greg Wichelns, District Manager
Stevie Ross, Administrative Secretary
Richard Jacobs III, Conservation Specialist III
W. Spencer Yager, Conservation Specialist II
David Massie, Conservation Specialist III
Henny Calloway, Conservation Specialist II
Stephanie Rose DeNicola, Information/Education Coordinator
Amanda McCullen, Conservation Specialist III
Kendall Dellinger, Conservation Specialist II
Brandy Harris, Conservation Specialist II
Lily Smith, Conservation Specialist I

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Rex Rexrode, District Conservationist
Ashleigh Cason, Soil Conservationist
Courtney Pooton Kidwell, Soil Conservationist
Corey Bray, Soil Conservation Technician
John Jeffries, National Experienced Workforce Solutions

All programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.



351 Lakeside Drive
Culpeper, VA 22701
540/825-8591

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FAIRFAX, VA
PERMIT NO 4889



80 YEARS OF
FARM & HOME
KNOWLEDGE

Culpeper 540-825-2200
Rappahannock 540-987-8555

Hometown Service Since 1932

www.cfcfarmhome.com

Fencing - Water Troughs - Seed & Seeding

If you would like your name removed from our mailing list, please just give us a call at 540/825-8591 or send an e-mail to stephanied@culpeperswcd.org.



excellence / experience / exceptional service

Cindy Reed
Realtor

540-395-2167
cindy.reed@exprealty.com
cindyreed.exprealty.com





The sponsors of this newsletter help support the conservation efforts of the Culpeper SWCD. If you are interested in placing information about your business or organization in this space, please call (540) 825-8591.