

2024-2025

Annual Report

Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District

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Culpeper, Greene, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock Counties, member localities of the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District, provide annual financial support for district operations, district staffing, technical assistance and engineering assistance.

The Soil and Water Conservation District seeks out many project-based grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia-Department of Environmental Quality, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration BWET Program, the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, Chesapeake Bay Trust, the Virginia Resource Use Education Council and others, to support program development and staffing.

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia General Assembly, Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Board of Directors

Culpeper County

Dennis Verhoff
Bob Williamson, Treasurer

Madison County

Lynn Graves, Chair
Anthony Jewett

Greene County

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Robert Runkle
Steve Morris, At-Large Director
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Orange County

Robert Bradford
J. Robert Brame III
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Director

Rappahannock County

Mike Biniek
Mike Sands, Vice-Chair

District Staff

Greg Wichelns, District Manager
Stevie Ross, Financial Specialist
Richard Jacobs III, Conservation Specialist III
W. Spencer Yager, Conservation Specialist II
David Massie, Conservation Specialist III
Henny Calloway, Conservation Specialist II
Amanda McCullen, Conservation Specialist III
Kendall Dellinger, Conservation Specialist II
Lily Smith, Conservation Specialist II
Cheyenne Sheridan, Conservation Specialist II
Trevor Talley, Conservation Specialist I
Stephanie DeNicola, Information/Education Coordinator

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Rex Rexrode, District Conservationist
James Ingram, Soil Conservationist
Isabella Brush, Soil Conservationist

John Jeffries, National Experienced Workforce Solutions

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About Us

The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD) is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Geographically, it includes the counties of Culpeper, Greene, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock. Founded in 1939 by citizens concerned about soil and water conservation, the CSWCD is the largest of forty-seven conservation districts within Virginia and serves an area covering 1,445 square miles with about 136,000 constituents (according to US Census 2021 estimates).

The staff consists of a District Manager, eight Conservation Specialists, an Administrative Secretary and an Information/Education Coordinator.

A 12-member Board of Directors governs the District. Each of the five counties within the District elects two members in the general election, one member is appointed at large and a Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent from one of the member counties is appointed by Virginia Tech. Directors are not paid, but are locally elected officials who direct both the functioning of the district and the district staff as they work in partnership with the state and federal conservation staff. Directors are expected to attend monthly board meetings, participate on District Committees and work groups, represent the citizens of their county in regard to conservation issues and be willing to stay abreast of local conservation issues. They are also required to participate in policy and program development, as well as provide financial direction for proper expenditure and management of funds within the District. The Board also appoints Associate Directors as needed. Associate Directors are non-voting members. The Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 10am and rotates meeting locations among the five counties.

All citizens of the District may have a voice in resource and conservation planning by attending monthly board meetings, communicating their concerns to directors or staff and by participating in District programs. The CSWCD develops a wide range of programs to encourage community participation in conserving and protecting soil, water and related natural resources, with particular focus on the impact of land disturbance and management of the Chesapeake Bay. District programs are funded by local, state and federal support and by District sponsored grants. Technical support is received from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).



Our Relationships

Member Counties

The CSWCD signs a Memorandum of Understanding with each member county, a document that outlines responsibilities and is the foundation for an enduring cooperative working relationship. Such cooperation allows a joint effort in the solution of problems relating to the planning and development of soil, water, and related natural resource issues. Through our relationship with our member counties, CSWCD provides input for each county's comprehensive plan, reviews case files for input to planning commission meetings and reviews site plans for four counties and two towns.

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

The CSWCD is a member of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD). The mission of the VASWCD is to serve and strengthen member SWCDs in natural resource protection. The VASWCD also provides cohesive representation to legislative bodies on natural resource issues.

National Association of Conservation Districts

The CSWCD is a member of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The NACD provides a national voice to America's 3,000+ conservation districts on conservation issues. Along with membership in the NACD comes membership in the National Watershed Coalition, an association of organizations that advocates resource management from the small watershed perspective.

Department of Conservation and Recreation

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is one of the lead state agencies for the control of nonpoint source pollution in Virginia; its soil and water conservation programs are delivered within the counties of Culpeper, Greene, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock by the CSWCD. Funding for program delivery and implementation is provided by the state legislature and administered by DCR. The DCR Conservation District Coordinator (CDC) serves as the liaison between the District and DCR. The CDC also provides administrative assistance for the state's conservation program, assures that there is compliance with DCR requirements and interacts routinely with district staff and directors.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The CSWCD works closely with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). A Memorandum of Understanding with NRCS outlines this cooperative effort. NRCS provides the services of qualified personnel for resource planning and technical assistance. The CSWCD annually reviews and provides comment on the agreement between the two agencies.

Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (VSWCB) was established by the General Assembly to help guide the delivery of soil & water conservation services to citizens of the Commonwealth. The board's responsibilities include oversight and support of Virginia's soil & water conservation districts as well as oversight and enforcement of dam safety and floodplain management programs and regulations. District Directors interact with members of the Board on a myriad of topics.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)

VCE brings the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the Commonwealth. Local Extension Agents help design, implement and evaluate needs-driven programs such as pesticide collection, household water testing, farmers' markets and producer-targeted workshops. The District has a strong relationship with VCE agents.

Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF)

DOF provides technical assistance to private landowners to assist them in managing their forest land for forest products, water quality, protection of threatened and endangered species, historic resources and wildlife habitat. DOF also provides marketing and utilization assistance to forest industry and provides technical assistance in managing state owned lands of other agencies. This includes technical assistance and resource management plans, forest renewal, cost-share incentives, harvesting assistance and community grant assistance. District staff interact with DOF foresters on landowner assistance.

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

DEQ administers state and federal laws and regulations for air quality, water quality, water supply and land protection. In addition, DEQ offers other programs that cover a variety of environmental activities, such as improving the ability of businesses and local governments to protect the environment, and offering technical and financial assistance for air and water quality improvements. The District interacts with many voluntary grant programs administered by DEQ.

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR)

DWR is responsible for the management of inland fisheries, wildlife and recreational boating for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Private Land Biologists advise landowners in the Culpeper District about practices that enhance or reestablish wildlife habitat.

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)

FSA serves all farmers, ranchers, and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective and efficient agricultural programs for all Americans. District staff rely on FSA assistance to effectively provide services to agricultural producers.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF)

VOF is Virginia's leader in land conservation, protecting more than 750,000 acres in 106 counties and independent cities. VOF is a public organization, created by the Virginia General Assembly in 1966 under [Virginia Code § 10.1-1800](#). The District co-holds conservation easements with VOF.

Virginia Resource Use Education Council (VRUEC)

The VRUEC is an inter-agency council that coordinates environmental education events and policies in the Commonwealth. The Culpeper SWCD holds one of the two seats on the Council reserved for Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This role on the VRUEC allows Culpeper staff to participate in a NOAA Education grant and have a role in statewide environmental education policies.

Accomplishments of Committees

1. Technical

- Allocated over **\$6,174,541.44** in agricultural cost share funds to needed projects across the 5 County District and **\$54,035.14** in state tax credits.
- Allocated **\$540,343.64** in residential cost share funding to **424** needed projects in the Upper Hazel, Upper Rapidan, Robinson River, Upper York and Mountain Run TMDL watersheds in the District. The District also began a locally funded program for systems outside of TMDLs.
- Inspected, maintained & repaired 11 watershed flood control dams in Culpeper & Madison Counties.
- Committee Chair & staff provided input on programmatic improvements as a member of the State Agricultural Best Management Practices Advisory Committee & BMP Sub Committee.
- Reviewed **112** site plans across five counties and the Town of Culpeper for Erosion & Sediment Control & Stormwater Management Engineering.
- Participated in quarterly dam safety trainings for conservation districts.

2. Operations

- Reviewed monthly functions of all aspects of District business.
- Coordinated preparation of the annual budget & annual plan of work.
- Oversaw expenditures and provided guidance for organizational growth.
- Sought to increase funding from the Commonwealth.
- Sought out additional funding grants and project grants.

3. Education/Public Relations

- Delivered programs to **8,225** students and **2,038** adults.
- Presented annual conservation award presentations at District's Annual Awards banquet.
- Provided year long training to two Envirothon teams, coordinated one State-wide virtual Envirothon training for coaches and students and organized the Area Envirothon competition.
- Coordinated NOAA B-WET grant for MWEEs and assisted with water testing clinics.
- Sold **62** rain barrels, **10,500** tree seedlings and **200** packets of meadow seed mix.
- Coordinated training for Board members on topics such as Cost Share Program Changes, Education Programs, TMDL updates and Virginia Conservation Assistance Program
- Published 4 editions of the District newsletter & articles for newspapers & other publications.
- Recognized **5** local students with college scholarships.

4. Legislative

- Participated in discussions with legislators.
- Drafted CSWCD positions on conservation & land use issues & provided opinions to VASWCD.
- Informed District Board on all legislative issues relating to conservation & funding affecting Districts.

5. Personnel

- Provided employee performance reviews & training guidance.
- Provided workload analysis & staffing level reviews.
- Guided policy development on all personnel matters.

6. Finance

- Reviewed monthly bank reconciliations & quarterly reports to DCR.
- Provided monthly review of treasurer's reports & input to annual budgeting.
- Provided oversight for longer term financial planning.

How We Operate

Annual Budget

The 2024-2025 operating budget (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025) for the CSWCD was \$1,583,533.

Operating Funding Sources

Funding included \$553,384 in general operating funds and \$749,404 in agricultural and septic technical assistance funding from the Commonwealth; \$214,745 from member counties; and repair funds from the Commonwealth; and \$66,000 in other grant projects.

• Culpeper	\$87,487
• Greene	\$13,561
• Madison	\$30,111
• Orange	\$61,563
• Rappahannock	\$22,023

Our Mission

To promote the stewardship of soil and water and the conservation of our natural resources by educating and providing technical assistance to manage, protect and enhance the land and water for the benefit and enjoyment of the citizens of Culpeper, Greene, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock Counties

Technical Accomplishments

Cost-Share Program

The Culpeper SWCD locally administers the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost-Share Program. Funded with state funds, this incentive program is designed to improve the quality of state streams, rivers and other water bodies through the implementation of BMPs. BMPs are designed to prevent soil erosion, minimize the introduction of nutrients, sediments and toxins into water bodies and enhance management opportunities. Sign-up for the program is on a continuous basis and eligible applicants, once approved, may receive up to 60-100 percent of the BMP installation cost up to \$300,000 per applicant per year. Watershed areas or hydrologic units within the district are prioritized for funding based on statewide prioritization and local concerns (see chart below). Hydrologic units (see map on following page) are determined and designated by the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) and can be a drainage basin, aquifer, soil zone, lake, reservoir or irrigation project.

Priority Hydrologic Units in the Culpeper District for 2024-2025

Water Body	Hydrologic Unit	County or Counties
Rappahannock River — Ruffans Run	RA18	Culpeper
Jonas Run	RA20	Culpeper
Mountain Run — Flat Run	RA21	Culpeper
Rappahannock River — Deep Run	RA23	Culpeper
Rapidan River — Marsh Run	RA27	Madison, Orange
Beautiful Run	RA29	Madison
Rapidan River — Poplar Run	RA30	Madison, Orange
Robinson River — Great Run	RA36	Madison
Rapidan River — Rapidan	RA37	Culpeper, Orange
Cedar Run	RA38	Culpeper
Rapidan River — Potato Run	RA39	Culpeper, Orange
Mountain Run — Mill Run	RA40	Culpeper, Orange
Rapidan River — Wilderness Run	RA43	Orange, Spotsylvania

Tax Credit Program

The Virginia Agricultural BMP Tax Credit Program began in 1998, providing financial incentives for the voluntary installation of BMPs that support Virginia's nonpoint source pollution water quality objectives.

In 2021, the General Assembly and the governor significantly increased agricultural BMP tax credits in Virginia. Producers may take a credit against state income tax for actual out-of-pocket expenses for agricultural BMPs. The current Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice Tax Credit offers a credit for twenty-five percent (25%) of the first \$100,000 expended for implementing or installing agricultural best management practices. If a producer receives cost-share funds from the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share (VACS) Program, only the producers share of the project (i.e. their out-of-pocket expense) is used to determine the amount of the tax credit. Producers who have an approved Resource Management Plan and who are not receiving any VACS Program cost-share funds for a particular BMP may receive a tax credit for fifty percent (50%) of the first \$100,000 expended for BMPs installed or implemented on the acreage included in the RMP.

- **Culpeper** **\$28,525.11 (11 landowners)**
- **Greene** **\$3,750.22 (7 landowners)**
- **Madison** **\$7,913.98 (7 landowners)**
- **Orange** **\$5,612.62 (7 landowners)**
- **Rappahannock** **\$8,233.21 (8 landowners)**

In addition, producers received \$68,120.01 in tax credits for projects allocated in Fiscal Year 2024 and earlier.

Equipment Tax Credit

There is also a tax credit to encourage farmers to use conservation equipment. Currently an Equipment Tax Credit is available for the purchase of no-till or precision agriculture equipment, as outlined in the VACS Manual.

Individuals may claim a state tax credit of 25% of all expenditures made for the purchase and installation of equipment certified by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (VSWCB). The Equipment Tax Credit is retroactively available for taxable years beginning Jan. 1, 2021, through Dec. 31, 2025. The credit may not exceed \$17,500 per individual/entity and must meet state-established criteria. Also, the farmer must have a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) approved by the local SWCD. The VACS Manual outlines the criteria for qualifying equipment.

Our Vision

*To achieve clear, clean surface and ground water, and
improved soil conditions that enhance the intrinsic value of Culpeper,
Greene, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock Counties.*

Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Control and Stormwater Management Programs

The Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Program, adopted as state law in 1973, established minimum standards and guidelines to be followed when nonagricultural lands are disturbed. The state program is implemented primarily through local program adoption. The CSWCD is contracted with four of five member counties (Culpeper, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock) to provide plan review service for their Erosion and Sediment Control Programs and provides assistance to Greene County as requested. The Town of Culpeper also contracts with CSWCD for services. District responsibility as the reviewing authority involves reviewing site plans for developments and to review rezoning requests, special-use permit applications and preliminary subdivision plans upon request by the County.

There were 112 plans reviewed during the 2024-2025. These site plans include single family homes and private driveways that disturb greater than one acre.

Site Plans Reviewed by Culpeper SWCD		
County	Reviewed	Approved
Culpeper	34	22
Town of Culpeper	15	10
Greene	None	None
Madison	9	7
Orange	44	38
Rappahannock	10	7



Figure 1: Active Erosion Control: Slope Remediation and Sediment Basin

The CSWCD relays complaints and observations regarding construction site activities to the appropriate county official. In addition, technical and educational assistance for E&S is provided to contractors, landowners and educators as requested.

The CSWCD has developed and provides several checklists for Erosion and Sediment Control Plans and Stormwater Management Plans. These checklists are guidance material for assisting contractors, engineers and developers in the planning and design of their land disturbing site plan. The Counties are encouraged to require the checklist as a prerequisite to site plan submission to ensure the quality of the site plan.

Land-disturbance activities not regulated under the Erosion and Sediment Control Program continue to cause problems for County development and the community. These activities include private agricultural and recreational pond construction, disturbance of wetlands, improper streambank alterations without appropriate permitting review and land clearing activities that lack an adequate plan for stabilization due to lack of clear intentions for future use of the land.

Within all reviews, the CSWCD consistently promotes the design and implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) design strategies. We have developed an updated Environmental Site Design (ESD) checklist to aid in the implementation of LID.

Best management practices have been inventoried from approved site plans within all five counties. There are a total of 435 stormwater management facilities within the five counties and Town of Culpeper. The following table depicts the aggregated amount of acreage served by these stormwater management facilities as of the field-verified September 2015 assessment grant through the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission and the Department of Environmental Quality.

Watershed	Stormwater Control Measures and Stormwater Treatment Practices	Runoff Reduction Practices
James	Detention Basin (28.36 acres); Underground Detention (5 ac); Wet Pond (1014.69 ac); Ext. Detention (12.81 ac); Manufactured Filters (1.69 ac)	Bioretention (78.37 ac); Infiltration (4.09 acre)
Rappahannock	Detention Basin (2,014.98 ac); Ext. Detention (1,044.26 ac); Underground Detention (34.23 ac.); Wet Pond (1684.65 ac); Manufactured Filters (24.13 ac.)	Infiltration (64.13 ac); Bioretention (78.69 ac); Wetland (0.33 ac); Riparian Buffer (5,735 LF); Green Roof (9 ac); Permeable Pave (5.31 ac); Dry Swale (11.76 ac); Level spreader (4.46 ac)
York	Detention Basin (380.87 ac); Ext.; Underground Detention (2.56 ac); Detention (15.03 ac.); Wet Pond (45 ac)	Infiltration (2.19 ac); Bioretention (0.36 ac.); Permeable Pave (0.1 ac.); Level spreaders (1.26 ac)



Figure 2: Bioretention Basin at Farm Credit in Culpeper County (2014 left; 2022 right)

Small Watershed Dams (PL-566 Structures)

The Watershed Protection & Flood Prevention Act (Public Law 83-566 usually referred to as PL-566) was established more than 50 years ago to help control the extensive damage caused by flooding and sedimentation. This law gave the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) the authority to work cooperatively with local governing bodies to construct and maintain dams throughout the country.

In the 1960s, the USDA Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) constructed fourteen dams on both private and public lands within the District—five in Culpeper County and nine in Madison County. The District assumed local sponsorship of these dams and with this came the responsibility to uphold the operation and maintenance of these dams. The District continues to hold responsibility for eleven of the dam structures. Operation and maintenance of White Oak Dam in Madison County was transferred to the Rapidan Service Authority. Mountain Run Lake Dam and Lake Pelham Dam are operated by the Town of Culpeper. Lake Pelham in Culpeper County and White Oak Reservoir in Madison County also serve as water supply reservoirs. Lake Pelham and Mountain Run Lake were completely rehabilitated during Fiscal Years 2017-2020.

The Culpeper SWCD spent **\$721,370** during the 2024-2025 fiscal year for restoring embankment shorelines, installing filter drains, replacing gate valves, mowing, weed control, fertilizer grazing and tree removal. Maintenance contracts are offered annually and are awarded by sealed bid. The District coordinates efforts to secure maintenance and repair funding from the Virginia General Assembly with the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Operation and maintenance is crucial to dam safety. Responsibilities of the CSWCD include:

- Annual inspections.
- Hiring contractors for routine mowing and maintenance and access road maintenance.
- Critical period inspections and monitoring (for example, during unusually heavy rainfall).
- Keeping spillways clear of debris.
- Preventing trees or bushes from growing on the dams.
- Eliminating burrowing animals from dam embankments.
- Maintaining a healthy stand of grass on the dam and spillways to prevent erosion.
- Inspecting for seepage on the dam face and around all metal and concrete parts.
- Inspecting closely for signs of deterioration
- Replacing and rebuilding internal drains and embankment shorelines



Above : “ Principal spillway slip line operations November 2021

PL-566 Dams Within the CSWCD

Dam ID	Watershed	County	Normal Surface Area (Acres)	Drainage Area (miles²)
8A	Mountain Run	Culpeper	22	5
11	Mountain Run	Culpeper	75	5.86
13	Mountain Run	Culpeper	15	3.22
18	Mountain Run	Culpeper	46	3.99
50	Mountain Run	Culpeper	254	23.9
1B	Beautiful Run	Madison	13.5	2.31
2A	Beautiful Run	Madison	8.7	3.61
4	Beautiful Run	Madison	3.9	0.48
5	Beautiful Run	Madison	3.2	0.55
6	Beautiful Run	Madison	6.1	1.14
7	Beautiful Run	Madison	5.3	0.75
10	Beautiful Run	Madison	3.2	0.55
11	Beautiful Run	Madison	9.3	1.44
White Oak Dam	White Oak Run	Madison	46	5.05

Agricultural Stewardship Act

The **Agricultural Stewardship Act** (ASA) was passed into Virginia law in 1996 and enables the mechanism by which a complaint can be filed with the State Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services claiming that a particular agricultural operation is or will be polluting water. If the complaint is found to be justified, the producer is required by state law to remedy the situation. The CSWCD provides technical assistance to any producer who has been identified by an ASA complaint. By identifying new management options and utilizing the BMP cost-share program and other incentive-based programs prior to mandated enforcement, the district can assist producers with remedial actions.

There were zero ASA complaints in the Culpeper District in Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

USDA Farm Bill Programs

NRCS offers financial and technical assistance through conservation practices, activities and enhancements to help agricultural producers make and maintain improvements on their land. Producers with active contracts under the 2018 Farm Bill may continue completing practices as scheduled.

Environmental Quality Enhancement Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, and improved or created wildlife habitat.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) helps agricultural producers manage financial risk through diversification, marketing or natural resource conservation practices. NRCS administers the conservation provisions while the Agricultural Marketing Service and Risk Management Agency implement the production diversification and marketing provisions.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) helps landowners restore, enhance and protect forestland resources on private and tribal lands through easements and financial assistance. Through HFRP, landowners promote the recovery of endangered or threatened species, improve plant and animal biodiversity and enhance carbon sequestration.

Programs administered by FSA

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands. This program is administered by **USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)**.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) encourages farmers to convert highly sensitive cropland to vegetative cover, reducing erosion and runoff and providing wildlife habitats. Rent is paid per acre of land enrolled for a 10 to 15-year period. Cost share is available for BMPs to establish the conservation cover of trees or herbaceous vegetation. Offers are accepted and processed during fixed sign-up periods. (There is also a CRP continuous sign up program.)

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is an enhancement of the existing CRP Continuous sign-up program. CREP provides significant financial incentives to encourage stream bank and wetland protection as well as restoration of streamside forests. Pasture and cropland adjacent to perennial and intermittent streams, seeps, springs, ponds and sinkholes are eligible to be enrolled. CREP provides a yearly rental per acre for 10 to 15 years (amounting to twice that offered by CRP), pays for fencing to exclude livestock from riparian buffers, alternative water source development, and hardwood tree planting. A flat rate incentive payment is also offered for placing a permanent riparian easement on the enrolled area.

2024-2025 USDA Conservation Incentive Programs

- NRCS obligated 17 new EQIP contracts: 5 in Culpeper County, 2 in Greene County, 6 in Madison County, 1 in Orange County and 3 in Rappahannock County.
- Planning is ongoing for easements in Greene, Orange, Madison and Culpeper Counties.
- Twelve expiring CREP contract were re-enrolled in the program: 3 in Culpeper County, 2 in Greene County, 2 in Madison County, 3 in Orange County and 2 in Rappahannock County.
- The office is currently administering 87 active contracts over all programs.
- Contract funds obligated in 2025 were \$701,510.43

NRCS developed 26 farm conservation plans during the year as follows:

- Culpeper 7 (1,613.8 acres)
- Greene 5 (140 acres)
- Madison 7 (401.2 acres)
- Orange 5 (110.1 acres)
- Rappahannock 2 (15.6 acres)



Left: Grazing Management
Right: Water Trough

TMDL and WQIF Implementation

The District regularly seeks out grants from both state and federal sources to assist landowners with the implementation costs for projects that both protect and improve local stream health. The District actively pursues implementation of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) projects and options available from federal nonpoint source 319 grant programs in the five member counties. As required under both state and federal laws, TMDLs establish water quality improvement thresholds for selected pollutants which have been identified through stream water sampling as exceeding state water quality standards for designated uses. Typically the TMDLs rely on federal funding from the Environmental Protection Agency directed through the Department of Environmental Quality. Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) state grants provide similar opportunities.

In addressing individually the TMDL Implementation Plans for the Upper Hazel River watershed in Rappahannock, Madison and Culpeper Counties, the Mountain Run, Muddy Run, Lower Hazel watershed in Culpeper County, the Upper York watershed in Orange County, the Robinson River watershed in Madison County and the Upper Rapidan River watershed in Greene, Madison and Orange Counties, the Department of Environmental Quality provided grants awarded on a competitive basis. At this time, due to very significant increases in State agricultural funding, the TMDL funding has been primarily on septic system assistance. In addition the District secured funds to provide septic system cost share for all areas of the District not included in the TMDL watersheds. There has been expanded outreach in all areas through signs, meetings, mailings and more. The results of all 6 of these grant projects are tabulated on the following pages by both project and by county.

During FY 2025 the District assisted with the completion of two additional TMDL implementation plan development projects are nearing completion plans and the District will pursue funding for them: North Fork Rivanna River in Greene County and Lower Rapidan River in Culpeper and Orange Counties.

In total, District staff allocated 424 projects totaling **\$540,343.64**.

In addition, District staff completed 45 septic system cost share projects that were allocated in 2024. These projects totaled **\$30,881.25**.



Allocated Projects Listed by County		
Culpeper County		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	107	\$23,817.50
Connection to sewer (RB2)	1	\$4,804.92
Septic repair (RB3)	2	\$6,917.92
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	48	\$69,568.50
Septic replacement (RB4)	6	\$49,125.00
Septic replacement (RB4P)	1	\$8,250.00
Septic replacement Engineered (RB5)	3	\$61,303.62
Total	168	\$223,787.46
Greene County		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	35	\$8,224.50
Septic repair (RB3)	2	\$4,142.50
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	20	\$32,054.86
Septic replacement (RB4)	1	\$6,250.00
Septic replacement (RB4P)	1	\$9,900.00
Total	59	\$60,571.86
Madison County		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	51	\$11,981.25
Septic repair (RB3)	1	\$4,500.00
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	28	\$44,481.07
Septic replacement (RB4)	3	\$18,684.50
Total	83	\$79,646.82
Orange County		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	24	\$5,861.25
Septic repair (RB3)	4	\$19,125.00
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	32	\$76,774.75
Septic replacement (RB4)	2	\$12,500.00
Septic replacement (RB4P)	1	\$13,200.00
Total	63	\$127,461.00
Rappahannock County		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	32	\$7,816.50
Septic repair (RB3)	1	\$3,750.00
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	17	\$30,390.00
Septic replacement (RB4P)	1	\$6,920.00
Total	51	\$48,876.50

Allocated Projects Listed by Grant Project		
Locally Funded Projects		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	78	\$17,402.25
Septic repair (RB3)	3	\$7,310.42
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	47	\$73,163.22
Septic replacement (RB4)	3	\$18,750.00
Septic replacement (RB4P)	3	\$31,350.00
Septic Engineered (RB5)	2	\$45,675.00
Total	136	\$193,650.89
Upper York River TMDL		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	13	\$3,106.25
Septic repair (RB3)	3	\$15,375.00
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	19	\$44,707.50
Septic replacement (RB4)	1	\$6,250.00
Total	36	\$69,438.75
Mountain Run, Muddy Run and Lower Hazel River		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	54	\$12,182.50
RB2	1	\$4,804.92
Septic repair (RB3)	1	\$3,750.00
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	24	\$49,013.50
Septic replacement (RB4)	4	\$34,750
Septic Engineered (RB5)	1	\$15,628.62
Total	85	\$120,129.54

Continued on page 21

Allocated Projects Listed by Grant Project		
Upper Hazel River TMDL		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	40	\$9,637.50
Septic repair (RB3)	1	\$3,750.00
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	19	\$24,933.75
Septic replacement (RB4)	1	\$6,250.00
Septic replacement with pump (RB4P)	1	\$6,920.00
Total	62	\$51,491.25
Upper Rapidan River TMDL		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	25	\$6,178.75
Septic repair (RB3)	1	\$3,750.00
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	14	\$27,640.14
Total	40	\$37,568.89
Robinson River TMDL		
Practice	Number	Allocated
Septic pump out (RB1)	39	\$9,193.75
Septic repair (RB3)	1	\$4,500.00
Septic pump out & inspection (RB3M)	22	\$33,811.07
Septic replacement (RB4)	3	\$20,559.50
Total	65	\$68,064.32

Education

Youth Education Programs

The District sponsored the following events:

2024-2025 Envirothon

The District trained and sponsored three Envirothon teams at Eastern View High School in Culpeper County. EVHS Teams A & B represented Culpeper SWCD at the Area II Competition in Loudoun County in April 2025. EVHS Team A competed at the State Competition in May 2025, where they placed 4th overall and 3rd in oral presentation. The District also coordinated one State-wide Envirothon training held at Graves Mountain Lodge in November 2024. Over 300 students and coaches attended the training.

Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE)

MWEEs returned with in-person programming. District-funded Environmental Literacy in the Piedmont occurred at all middle schools in the District: Culpeper County Middle School, Floyd T. Binns Middle School, William Monroe Middle School, William Wetsel Middle School, Locust Grove Middle School, Prospect Heights Middle School and Rappahannock County Elementary School. A total of **1,305** students participated in the program in 2024-2025 Fiscal Year. The goal of the program is to provide MWEEs to all 6th grade students in the District.

Presentations at Local Schools

In addition to the MWEE programs, SOL-based activities were coordinated with a number of local schools to discuss conservation topics throughout the District including AG Richardson Elementary School, Eastern View High School, Farmington Elementary School, Nathanael Greene Elementary School, Orange Elementary School, Orange County High School, Pearl Sample Elementary School, Rappahannock County High School, Waverly Yowell Elementary School, William Monroe High School, William Wetsel Middle School and Yowell Elementary School. Approximately **3,483 students** and **2,038 adults** within the District participated in a classroom activity with District staff.



The impact of vegetation is shown at the 3rd grade Field Day in Madison



Sixth grade students show a macroinvertebrate caught at the biological monitoring station at the Rose River MWEE

Adult Education

CSWCD staff made presentations to adults throughout the five-county area. The District sponsored or participated in the following events:

- Virginia Forage and Grasslands Winter Conference
- Woods and Wildlife Conference
- Orange County Annual Farm Bureau Meeting
- Central Virginia Cattlemen's Association Meeting
- Virginia Master Cattlemen's Workshop
- VANTAGE No-Till Conference
- VA Forage and Grassland Council Grazing School
- Greene County Farm Show
- Orange County Annual Farm Bureau Meeting
- Women in Ag Event
- FSA Farm Safety Day
- Erosion & Sediment Control Workshop
- Master Gardener Training: Water Conservation
- Realtor Workshop
- Culpeper Garden Club 90th Anniversary Flower Show
- Madison Garden Club
- Master Gardener Rain Garden Workshop
- Master Gardener Training
- ORMN Wetland Training

The District, along with regional and Agency partners, held the 3rd Annual New Landowners' Workshop on September 13, 2024. The agenda for the program is on the next page. Participants received a binder of publications and presentations from the day. The 4th Annual workshop is scheduled for September 5, 2025.

The District has held a spring meeting in Madison County that provided cost share updates and participant testimonials. Fifty five people were in attendance.

The District also submitted regular articles to Culpeper Quarterly, a newsletter that is sent to every address in Culpeper County, Greene County e-newsletter and Orange Insight, which goes to Orange County residents and businesses.

The District sent two targeted mailings in July 2024 and January 2025 to all recipients of land use taxation about District programs.

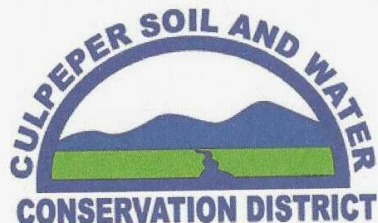
The District continued its free lawn soil testing program for local landowners.

The Culpeper Soil and Water
Conservation District Presents the

FOURTH ANNUAL NEW LANDOWNER CONSERVATION SERVICES WORKSHOP

SEPTEMBER 5, 2025
9:00AM - 2:00PM

GRAVES MOUNTAIN LODGE,
SYRIA, VIRGINIA



stevier@culpeperswcd.org
(540) 825-8591

REGISTRATION
REQUIRED

\$20

Limited
to 75
attendees

**LUNCH
INCLUDED!**

WITH PRESENTATIONS FROM:

- ✓ Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District
- ✓ Natural Resource Conservation Service
- ✓ VA Department of Forestry
- ✓ VA Cooperative Extension
- ✓ VSU Small Farm Outreach Program
- ✓ Virginia Outdoors Foundation
- ✓ Piedmont Environmental Council
- ✓ Smithsonian - VA Working Landscapes
- ✓ Ponds

Staff Professional Development

Continuing staff education is a priority at the Culpeper SWCD. This year the staff participated in training in the following areas:

Greg Wichelns, District Manager:

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training

Stevie Ross, Financial Specialist & Administrative Secretary

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training
- Voya General Information Session (VRS)
- Voya Transition Training Session (VRS)
- Annual Security Awareness Training (DCR)
- Tax Credit Training (DCR)
- VOYA Member Information Session (VRS)
- Voya Paycloud Training Session (VRS)
- Records Officer Training (LVA)
- Minutes Training (DCR)
- Minutes Training Follow Up (DCR)

Richard Jacobs III, Conservation Specialist

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training
- Wetland Restoration – DWR/Nature Conservancy
- VT Soil Health Coalition Webinar
- NOAA Atlas 15 Webinar
- DEQ Construction General Permit Update Webinar
- NRCS Soil Survey Webinar
- Graves VCAP Training – VASWCD

Stephanie Rose DeNicola, Communications Specialist

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training
- Graves Mountain Lodge Annual Training
- Woods and Wildlife conference

David Massie, Conservation Specialist

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training
- Pasture Management Field Day
- Farm Equipment Expo
- Finance and Conservation Seminar
- Virginia Forage and Grasslands Council Winter Conference
- Rappahannock New Landowner Workshop
- Area II Spring Meeting
- Culpeper New Landowner Workshop
- Emergency Action Plan Dam Meeting (Madison)
- Greater Piedmont Farmland Marketing Conference
- Rappahannock County Conservation Workshop
- 2025 Program Year Updates and Tracking Issues

Staff Professional Development

W. Spencer Yager, Conservation Specialist

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training
- Virginia Forage and Grasslands Winter Conference
- VANTAGE No-Till Conference
- Mentor for VA Forage and Grassland Council Grazing School
- Ag. BMP Training
- Graves Mtn. Trainings
- VASWCD Annual Meeting

Henny Calloway, Conservation Specialist

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training

Amanda McCullen, Conservation Specialist

- Tracking Program Updates Webinar
- VASWCD Mastering Excel: Tips & Tricks
- Precision Ag – Understanding Specifications and Farm Applications
- Livestock Psychology & BMP Planning
- Intro to Engineering Principles
- District Fence School
- Roof Runoff: Better Catch It
- Animal Waste – Preliminary Procedures for Effective Planning
- DCR Conservation Planning & Reporting Webinar
- VA Resource Training (DNH, DWR, and DHR)
- VFGC (VA Forage & Grassland Council) Winter Conference
- DCR IT Security Webinars
- VACS Updates Webinar

Kendall Dellinger, Conservation Specialist

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training
- Tracking Program Updates Webinar
- Mastering Excel: Tips & Tricks
- Precision Ag – Understanding Specifications and Farm Applications
- Livestock Psychology & BMP Planning
- Intro to Engineering Principles
- District Fence School
- Roof Runoff: Better Catch It
- Animal Waste – Preliminary Procedures for Effective Planning
- DCR Conservation Planning & Reporting Webinar
- VA Resource Training
- VACS Updates Webinar

Lily Smith, Conservation Specialist (Continued on next page)

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training
- ArcGIS Virtual JED
- Tracking Updates Virtual Training
- Graves Mountain Lodge Annual Trainings

Staff Professional Development

Lily Smith, Conservation Specialist (Continued from previous page)

- VA Resource Virtual Trainings
- Rappahannock Bale Grazing Demo
- Web Soil Survey Webinar Training
- VFGC in Warrenton
- How to Start a Farm Workshop in Greene Co.
- Greene County Conservation Speed Dating Workshop
- 2025 Virginia Master Cattlemen's Course
- Eastern VA Forage Conference in King George

Cheyenne Sheridan, Conservation Specialist

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training
- Graves Mountain Lodge Annual Training
- DCR Conservation Planner
- 2025 VFCG Winter Conference in Warrenton
- 2025 Eastern VA Forage Conference
- Agriculture of the Middle: Exploring the Importance, Values, and Vitality of Mid-Size Farms
- VA Master Cattleman's Program 2025

Becky Haines, Program Assistant

- DCR IT Security Awareness Training
- Virginia Resource Training (DNH, DWR, DNH)
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR)
- DCR Tax Credit Training
- State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act
- Ag/BMP CAS suite
- SWCD on Meeting Minutes
- Annual VACS update
- CAS PY26 Updates

Trevor Talley

- Central Virginia Cattlemen Association
- CAS Training
- Cover Crop Economics
- VA BMP and Cost Share program
- Eastern VA forage conference
- AOTM VT Webinar
- VACS Program update
- CAS Updates training
- Overview of Water Quality Resource Assessment
- Nitrogen Management and Concerns
- Phosphorus Management and Concerns
- Sediment Management

Trevor Talley (Continued from previous page)

- Water Bodies
- Pest Management and Water Quality Implications
- Water Management
- Pesticide Management Orientation
- Virginia Water Concerns
- DCR Nutrient Management Soil Science, Soil Fertility and Crop Production School
- Perennial Stream Identification
- Virginia Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Protection
- Virginia Cultural and Historic Resources Protection
- Conservation Selling Skills
- Virginia Agriculture BMP and Cost Share Program
- How to Start Farm
- Virginia Forage and Grasslands Council

Community Outreach

CSWCD staff focused outreach efforts throughout the five-county area. Outreach activities included:

- **Website:** The Culpeper SWCD maintains and regularly updates a web site with information about the District, our programs and educational activities plus links to other informative and educational websites at www.culpeperswcd.org.
- **Quarterly Newsletter:** The quarterly 20-page newsletter is sent to all landowners in our member counties that receive land use tax benefits and others.
- **Newspaper Articles:** The District routinely submits articles to local newspapers on educational events, conservation news and various BMP programs available throughout the District.
- **Display Booth:** The Culpeper SWCD maintains a mobile display of District programs and accomplishments. We take these exhibits to agriculture-expo events, educational conferences and annual meetings. Conservation publications are offered to the public free-of-charge.
- **Community Events:** District staff attend community events ranging from farm tours, farmer education programs, STEM/STEAM nights at local schools and other events when requested.
- **Tree Sale:** Culpeper SWCD holds a tree seedling sale, featuring bare root seedlings, live stakes and meadow seed mixes. The 2025 flyer is on the next two pages.

College Scholarships:

This year, Benjamin Maclean was chosen to receive the annual John H. Boldridge Memorial Scholarship and Hannah Tolson was chosen to receive the second annual Laura Campbell Memorial Scholarship.

- Hannah Tolson graduated from Eastern View High School. She will attend Virginia Tech, where she will major in Water Resources, Policy and Management (\$2,000 award).
- Rhylie Shifflett graduated from William Monroe High School. He will attend The College of William & Mary, where he will major in Environmental Science (\$2,000 award).
- William Lillard graduated from Madison County High School. He will attend Randolph College, where he will major in Environmental Science (\$2,000 award).
- Katherine Slagel graduated from Orange County High School. She will attend Virginia Tech, where she will major in Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation (\$2,000 award).
- Benjamin Maclean is a Rappahannock resident and 2024 graduate of Highland School. He attends Virginia Tech, where his major is Agriculture Technology (\$2,000 award).

The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District is honored to recognize these students for their achievements and wish them well in their future endeavors.

Summer Camps:

Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District supported two students to attend Camp Woods and Wildlife held June 16-20 at the Holiday Lake 4-H Center in Appomattox, Virginia. The students representing the District were:

- Samantha Anderson (Culpeper)

Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District also supported four students to attend Youth Conservation Camp held July 13-19 at Virginia Tech. The students representing the District were:

- Rhyley Golon (William Monroe High School)
- Matthew Harmon (Culpeper County High School)
- Lincoln Stuart (Eastern View High School)
- Noah Stuart (Eastern View High School)

2025 Culpeper SWCD Tree Sale

Five of one species for \$5 (except American chestnut)
PICK UP FOR ALL PLANTS IS 3/21/2025 and 3/22/2025
 See article on page 5: culp-swcd-nletter-09.21.pdf (culpeperswcd.org)



American chestnut hybrid (*Castanea dentata x mollissima x crenata*)

Full Sun to Partial Sun; seedlings from open-pollinated nuts collected from select (blight tolerant with American chestnut form and appearance) trees in the Lesesne State Forest chestnut breeding area. Exact pedigree cannot be guaranteed because they are open-pollinated (male parent unknown), but these likely contain more than 50% American chestnut DNA with the remainder a mix of Chinese and/or Japanese chestnut origin. Should have improved blight resistance and are more likely to survive than wild-type American chestnut, but still are likely to become infected and may not survive to maturity.



Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Full sun to shade tolerant; Eastern redbud reaches a mature size of 15-30 feet in height and 6-10 inches in diameter. It grows on most soils, with a preference for rich, moist soils. The bark is hard, not strong, and dark brown. The flowers are small and pink. The seeds are small and round. Redbud is planted as an ornamental tree in many landscapes.



Full sun to shade tolerant; Red maple reaches a mature size of 90 feet in height and 2½ feet in diameter. It grows in a wide range of soil conditions, from dry to wet. The fruit and buds are a primary food source for many birds and mammals. The seeds are small and round. Red maple is a popular ornamental tree, with a fall color of orange and red.



White dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

Full sun to shade tolerant; White dogwood is a small tree with a spreading habit. It has a mature height of 20-30 feet with a diameter of 1-2 feet. The flowers are small and white. The fruit is a small, round, red berry. The tree is known for its white flowers that are surrounded by four large, white bracts. Although the fruits are poisonous if eaten by humans, more than 35 species of birds and many large and small mammals are known to eat them. The white dogwood is the state tree and state flower of Virginia.



Northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*)

Full sun; Northern red oak reaches a mature size of 70-90 feet in height and 2-3 feet in diameter. It achieves best growth on north and east slopes, but is commonly found on deep, well-drained, loamy soils and fertile coves. The acorns provide food for many mammals and birds. The trees symmetrical shape and fall color make it a desirable landscape tree. Northern red oak is one of the most important timber trees in the eastern US.



Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*)

Full sun; Virginia pine reaches a mature size of 50-80 feet in height and 12-14 inches in diameter. Small songbirds eat the seeds and may roost in thick stands of young pine. Virginia pines tolerance for poor soil makes it suitable for reclaiming strip-mined lands. Its habitat includes various well-drained soils, and it can tolerate eroded and dry soil.



Yellow poplar (*Linodendron tulipifera*)

Full sun; Yellow-poplar reaches a mature size of 90-110 feet in height and 2-3 feet in diameter, but can reach nearly 200 feet in height and 10 feet in diameter. Its habitat includes various moist, well-drained sites statewide, but it attains best growth on deep moist soils along streams and in lower mountain coves. Sprouts and buds are a major food of deer, and birds and squirrels eat the seeds. The flowers are an important nectar source for honey production. Yellow-poplar makes an impressive shade tree for large landscapes.





This meadow seed mix is designed to be ready to mix with your own manure and will cover 10 square foot area.
The meadow seed mix does not require any special care or maintenance for 6 hours or more in daylight.
The mix is designed for both riparian and agricultural land. It is suitable for use in any area where the seed mix will be applied.

Silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*) and for the phalaris (*Pennisetum*).
These seedlings are in boxes and are planted in soils.

Name	
Address	
Phone number	
E-mail	

Species descriptions & pictures from Virginia Tech Dendrology <https://dendro.cnre.vt.edu/dendrology/factsheets.cfm> & VDOF

Local Projects Funded through the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)

In 2024-2025, the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program or VCAP received substantial state funding to implement stormwater and landscaping practices on non-agricultural lands. Funding was secured from the Virginia Natural Resource Commitment Fund from Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the grant was administered by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Culpeper District helped nine landowners secure \$98,441.44 of funding assistance to address runoff concerns. Practices installed include Rainwater Harvesting; Conservation Landscaping – meadow, tree planting; Wet Swale; Permeable Pavement and Bioretention. These projects were from all five Counties

Below left: Rainwater Harvesting in Culpeper County

Below right: Bioretention and Permeable Pavement at the George Washington Carver Center.



Below left: A wet swale on a residential lot in Lake of the Woods.
Below right: A meadow on a residential lot in Greene



2024 Conservation Awards

The District's Annual Conservation Awards Dinner was held on November 7, 2024 in Culpeper to honor residents who have demonstrated leadership in the stewardship of local soil and water resources. The Clean Water Farm Awards are awarded to one farm in each county of the Soil and Water Conservation District that is exemplary in its protection of the state's soil and water quality, with particular emphasis on nutrient management.

The recipients of the Clean Water Farm Awards were:

- Culpeper County, Muddy Flats Farm LLC, **Susan & Rocky Gugino**
- Greene County, Hidden Valley Farm, **Patricia Myers**
- Madison County, Lewis A. Lamb & Sons Inc, **Josh Lamb**
- Orange County, The Rocklands Foundation, **O. Bruce Gupton**
- Rappahannock County, Beahm Family Farm, **Timothy Beahm**

The Conservationist of the Year Award is given to an individual or individuals who demonstrate outstanding leadership, hard work and investment in conservation practices that protect the quality of soil and water in the Culpeper District and exhibit strong advocacy to others for conservation. This year's award was presented to **J. Robert Brame** for exemplary conservation practices in Orange County.

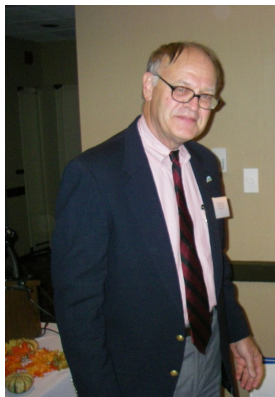
The 2024 Forestry Award was given to **Zachary Whitman (Rooted Land Farm)** of Madison County.

The 2024 Educator of the Year was presented to Eastern View High School Science Teacher and Envirothon Coach **Rachel Stuart** of Culpeper County.

The 2024 Wildlife Habitat Award was given to **Bessie Bell LLC** of Rappahannock County.

The 2024 Business and Industry Award was given to **Morningside Farm & Nursery** in Culpeper County.

Former Culpeper SWCD Board member **Tom O'Halloran** was recognized with the Chairman's Award for service to the Board.



Above left: Susan & Rocky Gugino (Culpeper Clean Water Farm Award)

Above center: J. Robert Brame

Above right: CSWCD Culpeper Director Bob Williamson, Tom O'Halloran and CSWCD Board Chair Lynn Graves

Additional pictures on page 34



Above left: Rooted Land Company (Forestry Award)
Above right: Hidden Valley Farm (Greene Clean Water Farm Award)



Above left: Lewis A. Lamb & Sons (Madison Clean Water Farm Award)
Above Right: Rocklands Foundation (Orange Clean Water Farm Award)



Above left: The Beahm family (Rappahannock Clean Water Farm Award)
Above right: Bessie Bell Farm (Wildlife Award)

Board of Directors

Soil & Water Conservation District directors are the local, legislatively mandated protectors & managers of natural resources. They are not public employees & receive no salary. Elected every four years in the general election, they work as volunteers to identify local conservation needs, represent local citizens in conservation issues, educate others about conservation issues & programs & work with local, state & federal agencies to resolve conservation problems. In the course of their work with the District, directors develop a working knowledge of the environmental sciences, agriculture, engineering & local state & national legislative processes. They also find it useful to develop skills such as leadership, personnel management, public speaking, negotiation & fiscal management.

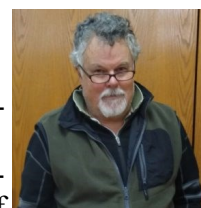
Lynn Graves, Chair

Lynn Graves has been a Director representing Madison County since 2005. Mr. Graves graduated from Virginia Tech in 1995 and was a member of the National Agricultural Fraternity, Alpha Gamma Rho. He has been a member of the Virginia Apple Growers Association Board and the Virginia State Apple Board. He also is serving on the Virginia Agribusiness Council Board and was the chairman in 2016. He also serves as past President of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Mr. Graves and his family own and operate Graves Mountain Lodge and Farm, which is located on the Rose River. The Lodge consists of 55 motel rooms and 20 cabins, and the farm consists of crop fields, pasture for 100 head of cattle and 30 acres of apple orchards. Also a cannery is operated by the Graves family which produces jams and jellies, and apple cider, along with the favorite apple butter. The Graves Mountain hosts numerous festivals during the year, Music Festival, Apple Festival, Heritage Day (Fishing for kids) and more. The Farm does school tours for 7,000 school children annually to promote agriculture. For the past 18 years the Farm has also run aquatic programs that teach children about watersheds, rivers and ponds. Mr. Graves and his wife, Tricia have 2 children, Amelia and Cole. The Graves family have been living in the Syria area for over 5 generations.



Mike Sands, Vice Chair

Mike Sands was elected as a Director for Rappahannock County in 2019. Michael is the District's Vice-Chairperson and serves on the Technical Committee. Mike and his wife are the owner/operators of Bean Hollow Grassfed, a pasture-based sheep and cattle farm in Flint Hill, VA. The farm practices include a number of BMPs including rotational grazing of a combined "flerd" of cattle and sheep, riparian area exclusion, and warm season native grasses. Mike was the Founding Executive Director of the Liberty Prairie Foundation in Grayslake, IL. He is now a Senior Associate with Dietel and Partners, a philanthropic consulting company.



Bob Williamson, Treasurer

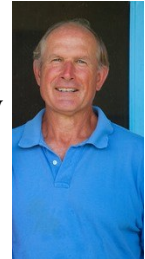
Bob Williamson was appointed as an Associate Director from Culpeper County in January 2020 and filled the vacancy from Tom O'Halloran's retirement in October 2024. Bob was born and raised on a beef cattle and burley tobacco farm near Abingdon, VA. He graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor's degree in Animal Science, where he was a member of Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity. He is married to Julie Gentleman Williamson. They have two children, Clifford and Lindsey, who are both Virginia Tech graduates. Bob and Julie are owners and operators of Step at a Time Farm, a horse boarding, breaking and training barn in Reva. Bob is retired from the USDA Farm Service Agency. He



is an active 4-H volunteer and adult leader and past member of the Virginia State Extension Leadership Council. He is also an active Farm Bureau member as a Virginia State and American Farm Bureau Convention Delegate and past member of Virginia Farm Bureau Federation Political Action Committee Board of Directors.

Mike Biniek

Mike Biniek & Susan Hoffman left their urban life to fulfill their dream of creating a model community for sustainable living. Belle Meade has grown into what it is today because of their flexible, nurturing patience as they developed the different components of their holistic vision. Mike, B.S. in Biology, is a lifelong student of nature & wildlife. He practices his ideology of creating a more sustainable, healthy planet as he cares for the animals, plants & community of Belle Meade.



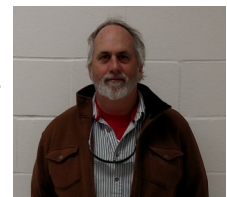
J. Robert Brame III

Bob Brame grew up on a working farm in Western Kentucky, but like many farm youths he was lured to the city. After almost 50 years practicing law in Richmond, Washington and Charlottesville, he retired in 2014 and swapped Kentucky farmland for a small cattle farm near Gordonsville. He has worked closely with Culpeper SWCD staff and NRCS to implement and expand on the conservation vision he inherited from his Father. These conservation practices include rotational grazing, eradication of invasives, replacement of KY 31 fescue with novel endophyte fescue and restoring native warm season grasses. He has heard the first Bobwhite call and is now looking for dung beetles and listening for whip-poor-wills. He remains hopeful that his grandchildren will see the return of native species. Bob was elected a Greene County director in 2007 and 2011 and an Orange Director in 2015 and 2019.



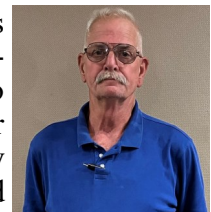
Robert Bradford

Mr. Bradford was elected as a Director in 1996 after serving as an Associate Director for three years. He lives in Orange County with his wife Virginia & his daughter Stella. They operate a short term rental and have a cow/calf operation as well as commercial timber. He has been a building contractor specializing in renovations. He owns and operates a beef cattle operation & has been a building contractor specializing in renovations. He is very supportive of BMPs & water quality & has an active roof water collection system on his farm. Mr. Bradford's activity as Director includes Technical Committee Chair.



David Cox

David Cox was elected as a Director representing Greene County in 2023. His term began in January 2024. He was in the dairy business for 42 years. He previously served on the Culpeper Soil & Water Board in the 1990s. He also served 8 years on the Greene County Board of Supervisors, including one year as chair. He is President of the Dyke Volunteer Fire Company and a custom hay operator. His three daughters were all raised on the family dairy farm. He and his wife Jennifer live near the farm today.



Molly Elgin McWilliams

Molly Elgin McWilliams, co-owner of J-Team Dairy, became an Associate Director in July 2024.

Anthony Jewett

Anthony Jewett was elected as a Director representing Madison County in 2023. His term began in January 2024. Anthony is from Madison County and while he wasn't raised in a barn, he did spend a significant amount of time in one growing up. Currently he is an owner/operator, with his parents and brother, of a farm in southern Madison. Their farm has a history of early adoption of soil and water conservation techniques, being among the first in the area to adopt full no-till and widespread usage of cover crops. Anthony has two degrees from James Madison University; a BBA in Computer Information Systems and a BS in Digital Video and Cinema. He currently works in the information technology field by day and on the farm afternoons/weekends/days off.



Steve Morris

Mr. Morris was appointed as an Associate Director in 2006 & became an appointed At-Large Director in December 2013. He was born & raised in Greene County & graduated from William Monroe High School in 1966. From 1974-1990 he worked in quality control on the construction of nuclear power plants. From 1991-2009 he raised beef cattle on 165 acres. All of the streams on the farm are fenced out from livestock & some acres are in CREP. He received the 2000 Bay Friendly Farm Award from CSWCD. His farm is now used for hay production. Mr. Morris & his wife, Sharon, have one daughter. In his spare time he enjoys hunting, fishing, golf & muscle car restoration. Steve's farm is protected by a conservation easement. Mr. Morris was appointed to represent CSWCD on the Rivanna River Basin Commission.



Robert Runkle

Robert Runkle has been representing Greene County since 2000. His Greene County Century Farm has been family owned for over 200 years. He graduated from James Madison University with a degree in Social Studies Education and was a teacher for 31 years. He was on the committee that prepared the original Greene County Comprehensive Plan, served on the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals. He is a member of the Greene County Farm Bureau and serves on its Board of Directors; and is a member of the Greene County Agricultural and Forestal District Committee. He is a past recipient of a CSWCD conservation award and has implemented numerous conservation practices over the years. He and his wife, Janet, have two daughters. His hobbies include travel and reading. He serves as Chair of the Personnel Committee.



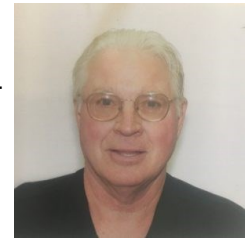
Sarah Weaver Sharpe

Sarah Weaver Sharpe joined the CSWCD Board as an Associate Director in July 2016 & assumed the role of the Appointed Extension Agent Board member in January 2017. She currently serves as the Greene County Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent with a focus in local foods & horticulture. Sarah grew up in Madison County on her family's pork, beef, hay & row crop farm. She is very passionate about helping producers start businesses & break into the local foods movement as well as helping to educate consumers about how food is grown & the production methods utilized. Sarah lives in Louisa County with her husband, two daughters & two dogs.



Dennis Verhoff

Dennis Verhoff joined the CSWCD Board as an elected Director from Culpeper County in January 2020. Dennis grew up on a diversified farm in northwestern Ohio that included dairy, hogs, poultry (chickens and ducks), sheep, tomatoes, corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, alfalfa and, in the early 1950s, sugar beets. He is a graduate of the University of Dayton, the University of Pennsylvania and the Ohio State University with degrees in French, Middle Eastern Studies, Arabic and international relations. Among many other endeavors, he was an English teacher in Tunisian public schools as a member of the US Peace Corps. This was a life-changing event in so many ways. After his return to the US, in addition to continuing his education, he taught school in New Jersey, worked as a Senate aide, analyzed and developed international policy in several Washington, DC organizations and owned his own construction business. In 1995, he began an organic vegetable operation in Culpeper County and marketed his produce at farmers' markets in Charlottesville, Culpeper and the Washington, DC area. In retirement, his travels have taken him to Germany, Italy, China, South Korea, India, Morocco and Iran among other countries.



Staff

Greg Wichelns

District Manager Greg Wichelns joined the District in January 1998 as the District Manager. He earned a BS in Ecological Agriculture from Evergreen State College & an MS in Horticulture at Washington State University. Previous to employment with the CSWCD he served as Greenhouse Facilities Manager & Staff Horticulturist for the Institute of Biological Chemistry at Washington State University.



Stevie Ross

Stevie joined the District in February 2021 as the Administrative Secretary and Financial Specialist. She grew up in Rappahannock County and later studied Accounting and Financial Management in college. Outside of work, Stevie is actively involved in her community and enjoys spending time with her family.



Richard Jacobs III, P.E.

Conservation Specialist Richard Jacobs joined the Culpeper SWCD in January of 2005 as a Conservation Specialist. He attended Virginia Tech & graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Systems Engineering. He is a licensed professional engineer & certified stream monitor with Save Our Streams. He has a wonderful wife & three beautiful daughters. He is an Eagle Scout & enjoys camping, hiking & caving with his family.



Stephanie DeNicola-Turner

Education & Information Coordinator Stephanie Rose DeNicola joined the Culpeper SWCD in January 2005. She was born & raised in Queens, NY & moved to the area in 2000 to serve as an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow in Washington, DC. Stephanie earned a B.A. in English from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania. Stephanie has worked at local non profit organizations that address volunteering, homelessness & domestic violence. In her spare time, she is a member of the SSBM Adult Ballet Company. In June 2011 Stephanie was recognized as a Certified Watershed Educator by the Virginia Departments of Education & Environmental Quality.



W. Spencer Yager

Spencer joined the District in September 2005 as a Conservation Specialist. Spencer was raised on his family's dairy farm. He graduated from Orange County High School, where he was very active in FFA and served as the regional vice president. He worked at Orange Madison Co-op and on the family farm while in high school and college. He graduated from North Carolina State University with an Associate's Degree in General Agriculture. Spencer worked on the family dairy and for a lumber company prior to working at the District. Spencer enjoys golf and grandchildren at the farm looking after their cattle.



David Massie

David joined the District in October 2006 as a Conservation Specialist. David was raised on his family's beef cattle farm. He was born in Charlottesville & raised in Rappahannock County. He graduated from Rappahannock County High School, where he was a 4-H All Star & an Eagle Scout. He graduated from Roanoke College in May 2006 with a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Policy. David has worked on the family farm since he began raising livestock in the 4-H program. The farm is a 6th generation commercial beef cattle operation that has installed various Best Management Prac-



tices. While in college, David interned at Piedmont Environmental Council & Mill Mountain Educational Park in Roanoke. In his spare time, David enjoys fishing, canoeing, spending time with his family & working on the family farm.

Henny Calloway

Henny joined the District in April 2012 as a Conservation Specialist. She graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor's degree in Animal Science. She has worked on the family horse, cattle & crop farm for many years. When she is not performing District tasks, she enjoys working on the farm or with her animals.



Amanda McCullen

Amanda McCullen joined the District in September 2016 as a Conservation Specialist. She grew up in Fauquier County on her family's farm & enjoyed participating in 4-H while growing up. She graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Biology from Christopher Newport University, with minors in Chemistry & Psychology. After college she volunteered at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, where she worked with cheetahs, black-footed ferrets & several species of endangered birds. Amanda joined Culpeper SWCD with 2 years of experience working for the Lord Fairfax SWCD in the Shenandoah Valley. She is an amateur birder, who enjoys hiking, skiing and time with friends and family.



Kendall Dellinger

Kendall Dellinger joined the District in May of 2018 as a Conservation Specialist. She grew up on her family's beef cattle farm, and was an active member and officer in both 4-H and FFA clubs. She was active in the agriculture community showing cattle, and participating in local and state livestock judging events. She was invited to participate in Governor's School for Agriculture, where her focus was Natural Resources. Kendall attended Virginia Tech where she was an active member of the Block and Bridle club, serving on the membership committee, and participated on the Virginia Tech Livestock judging team. She graduated from Virginia Tech in 2005 with an Animal Agriculture degree. In her spare time she enjoys farming and spending time with her family.



Lily Smith

Lily joined the District in September 2022 as a Conservation Specialist. She grew up in Madison County where she showed goats in the Madison Fair, played the banjo in a bluegrass band, and participated on various sports teams. Lily attended Eastern Mennonite University where she was a member of the women's soccer team. In 2022, she received her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science with a minor in Biology. Lily now lives in Madison with her husband, Kyle, and in her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her family, friends, animals, and time outdoors.



Cheyenne Sheridan

Cheyenne joined the District in September 2023 as a Conservation Specialist. She grew up exploring the outdoors and capturing various wildlife. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology at the University of Mary Washington hoping to fulfill her passion for the living world. At the district, she administers the Agriculture BMP and septic cost share programs. Cheyenne spends most days working outside, tending to chickens, and keeping up with her active boys.



Trevor Talley

Trevor joined the district in October 2024 as a Conservation Specialist. He grew up in Spotsylvania County on his family's farm, where they raised beef cattle, hay and produce. He earned his bachelor's degree in Agribusiness Management from Virginia Tech. He has a wonderful wife and two beautiful children and loves to spend his spare time with them. Trevor also enjoys being on the farm and has a passion to preserve wildlife habitat.

