

Views From The Foothills

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

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M. Johnson

Witness Trees & Independence by Adam Downing, Virginia Cooperative Extension

This year our nation celebrates 250 years of independence. And trees are an integral part of this celebration. Not only do we have trees that witnessed the fight for independence, but there is also a little-known story that was an early boiling point - before the Tea Party there was the Tree Party.

Witness Trees

I am tempted to argue that every tree is a witness tree because they all “see things” over the course of time. Trees connect us to the past because many common Virginia tree species have life spans that far exceed that of humans. For example, oaks and hickories in the mountains can easily live more than twice as long as the oldest people. And bald-cypress, in the swamps on the other side of Virginia, can live well over 1,000 years!

So, the definition of what constitutes a witness tree varies. The National Park Service leans towards trees that were present during significant historical events such as those that witnessed Civil War battles. Even more remarkable than Civil War era, trees would be trees that witnessed the Revolutionary War. Do we have trees in Virginia that witnessed the battles 250 years ago that led to the 56 signatures inked on parchment declaring our independence? Well, yes and no.

First, size is confusing for many folks when estimating tree age. I’ve been in many conversations with people who believe that a certain big tree they favor on their land “must be at least 200 years old” because it’s so big. Site and species, however, have more to do with size than age does. Fast-growing species, such as yellow-poplar, growing on high-quality sites (fertile soils, adequate moisture), can become very large trees in as little as 40 years. Conversely, tenacious species like hickory and some oaks, can be well over 150 years old and still be smaller in girth than a telephone pole.

Second, knowing the exact age of a tree can be tricky. Apart from historical evidence, the only way to determine the age of a tree without cutting it down is to core it. This entails extracting a pencil-sized piece of wood and counting the rings. And for this technique to be accurate, the tree must have a solid core, which is rather unusual in ancient trees.

Nonetheless, we most assuredly have trees across Virginia that were alive on July 4, 1776. We can confidently say this because we have numerous species in the Old Dominion that can easily live more than 250



The Brompton Oak on the campus of the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg is a good example of a witness tree. Already mature during the Civil War, the tree stood on ground where thousands of soldiers fought, suffered, and died. The oak provided shelter for wounded soldiers. “The breeze came fresh and cool from the north; the air was pure and clear; the sky perfectly cloudless. ... It was a day for the convalescents, and it seemed as if those who were near to death must be revived by the delicious softness of the bracing air. We moved them out of the stifling rooms to the lawn ... a grand old oak ... gave shelter to nearly fifty men.” William Howell Reed, 1866. Photo by: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech.

Continued on page 3

Agricultural Cost Share Practices

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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. • Pays 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. • Pays 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"> • Pays 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. • Pays 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 \$100/acre to kill & \$45/acre for legumes.
Nutrient Management Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pays 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"> • Pays 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"> • Pays up to \$70/acre to convert from conventional tillage to a no-till system for 5 years. • Pays 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"> • Pays up to 75% to grade & seed gully erosion. • Pays up to 75% to establish grass filter strips along waterways adjacent to crop, hayland or animal holding areas. <u>NEW! Buffer payment rate of \$80/acre/year paid upon installation.</u> • Pays up to 75% to grade, fill & seed critically eroding areas.
Continuing Conservation Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pays \$0.50-\$1.25/linear foot of stream bank protected with fencing. • Pays \$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"> • Pays 75% of the cost to stabilize &/or grade eroding streambanks on ag or forestall land including 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

250 years. To have survived this long, they had to have avoided widespread clearing of the region for agriculture, which covered most of the eastern seaboard by the turn of the 19th century, as well as other threats like severe weather, insects, disease, and fire. We are most likely to find them in hard-to-reach places like cliffs and swamps. They might be hard to find and verify, but we have trees around that have witnessed all manner of history.

If you are interested in big and old trees, you may enjoy looking into the Remarkable Trees of Virginia project (<https://dendro.cnre.vt.edu/remarkabletree/index.html>) which documents significant trees across the state and is part of the Virginia Big Tree Program (<https://bigtree.cnre.vt.edu/>) at Virginia Tech. Now on to the little-known story that played a role in starting the American Revolution.

The Tree Party

What do the flags of Maine and Vermont have in common with the Royal Navy and the American Revolution? Hint: it's a tree species that has been called the sequoia of the East.

While not as tall as the sequoias, eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) is the tallest tree species in the eastern United States, and the tallest pine species in North America. White pine growing on good soil can easily exceed 150 feet tall, with the current champion exceeding 180 feet. Even more remarkable, though not verifiable, is that, according to some sources, old-growth white pine in the New England region of Pre-colonial America may have well exceeded 200 feet. This height, combined with white pine's light weight yet strong wood, leads us to the story behind the state flags bearing this majestic tree and its role in the American Revolution.

Great Britain's Royal Navy once ruled the seas in wooden ships powered by wind. To go farther and faster, taller masts were needed, but England's forest had been cutover several times, leaving little but firewood. By the 17th century, the King was competing with other great empires for ship building material in the Baltic region. Then came knowledge of an abundance of the perfect tree, the white pine! The combination of height, strength, and weight made for perfect masts and was used for many other purposes as well. The pitch and tar from the trees were used for waterproofing and the turpentine was used to take protective finishes.

White pine became a significant export commodity, but the King of England felt that too many of the best trees were being used by the colonists, and he feared a shortage would ensue for his Navy. As such, the Crown revised its Massachusetts Bay Charter in 1691 with a Mast Preservation Clause that stated that all trees 24 inches and larger, one foot above the ground, belonged to the King. Royal surveyors then commenced to mark such trees with the King's Broad Arrow. The colonists grew to resent this act of eminent domain on what they felt was private property and many began to resist. Many pines marked with the King's Broad Arrow were poached and sawn into widths just under 24 inches to spite the law.

This culminated in 1772, a year before the Boston Tea Party, with what came to be called the Pine Tree Riot. Officials in New Hampshire, who were to protect the King's trees, arrested six sawmill owners for possessing and milling the King's trees without a license. One of the owners refused to pay the fine of £100. This sawmiller was released with the agreement he would return the next day with his bail. He did return, with 30-40 friends, all disguised with soot covering their faces. They ran the King's tree police out of town. According to Heather Cox Richardson, Professor of History at Boston College, "While eight of the men were later charged with assault, the local judges who sentenced them let them off so lightly the verdict could easily be seen as support for their actions."

We are a nation and a people based on principle. Many historians regard this act of rebellion every bit as important in launching the fight for independence as the Boston Tea Party. I think these rioters had at least one thing right, that our trees should be used to meet our needs as a society. Thankfully, we won our independence, and we still have the majestic eastern white pine and other species continuing as rich natural resources unique to our great country. A thank you to our forefathers who fought for and obtained the independence we now enjoy.

Happy Birthday Uncle Sam!

Adam Downing is the Northwest District Extension Agent, adowning@vt.edu, 540-948-6881.

Participant Corner: Scott Jenkins & Lisa Haney **VA Conservation Assistance Program**

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine a typical one-acre home lot. A couple of native trees and an expanse of low-cut green grass as far as the eye can see – until, wait – is that a Bamboo mini-forest in the back?! As you start to look around, other things start coming more into focus ... Bradford Pears, Butterfly Bush, Autumn Olive, Rose of Sharon, Forsythia and Japanese STILT GRASS – egads! Then you notice that water is just running off into the yard. Suddenly your eyes snap open as you realize that you see few birds, no native pollinators nor signs of any critters!

Now, close your eyes again... Imagine that same small lot after a good bit of research, great advice from Culpeper SWCD, a local nursery, a little assistance from the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) and a lot of work ... over 400 native trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses across 30+ different species have been planted and many non-natives/invasives removed including the Bradford Pears and Bamboo mini-forest. Three large wildflower pollinator gardens are in place including the most recent Milkweed Garden to support Monarch butterflies. Logs with drilled holes inviting our native Mason Bees. Three Bluebird houses. Three water gardens teaming with frogs & toads, lizards and other reptiles running around everywhere. Six rain barrels from Culpeper SWCD collecting water used on plants around the property. There are now numerous species of birds year-round, too many species of pollinators to count and many different critters captured on the trail cam enjoying their new habitat and ponds. The only remaining grass is covering the septic drain field!

We wanted to increase the native biodiversity to create a wildlife and pollinator habitat that would make a positive difference and one that would make Doug Tallamy proud. We still have work to do but the results thus far are noticeable and truly satisfying – for us and all of our visiting nature friends!

Article authors Scott Jenkins and Lisa Haney live in Culpeper County and participated in the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) that enabled them to reduce invasive species and plant native plants through the Conservation Landscaping Practice.



Above: Bamboo before & After



Above: Conservation Landscaping

Agricultural Information

Selling your Land? Got BMP's?

By Lily Smith, CSWCD Conservation Specialist III

If you're planning to sell your land, don't forget to check for active Best Management Practices (BMPs) on the property. Many BMPs, such as livestock exclusion fencing or watering systems, receive cost-share or tax credits and come with a maintenance requirement that can last anywhere from 10 to 15 years. New landowners are often unaware that a BMP is under contract, which can lead to compliance issues down the road.

To make the transition smoother, the cost share program offers a Transfer of Maintenance Responsibility Agreement. This form allows the responsibility for maintaining the BMP to shift from the seller to the buyer, ensuring the practice continues to be properly maintained for the remainder of its lifespan. If you're selling land with BMPs that are still in lifespan, contact our office to obtain the form and then get it dual signed. Not only will this protect the investment, but it will also set the new owner up for success. If you do not officially transfer the responsibility, you remain responsible for the BMP regardless of who owns the land.

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 (DEQ) 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 at (804) 929-5085 to find out if you're eligible.

Missouri Grazing Manual Available

By David H. Massie, CSWCD District Manager

The Culpeper SWCD 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. Manuals are for sale for \$20 plus tax.

The distribution of these manuals will be on a first come, first serve basis. We also have pasture grazing sticks for sale for \$5 plus tax. 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 tool on your farm.

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>.

Geotextile Fabric Available!

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!



Septic System Myths

Reprinted with Permission: Illinois River Watershed Partnership
<https://www.irwp.org/stories/septic-system-myths>

One thing is for certain: There are a lot of misconceptions about wastewater. If taking care of your septic system is second nature to you, you are among the few. Some homeowners struggle to locate their systems, while others carefully measure out their additives in hopes to prescribe away anything bad happening. To ensure the longevity of your septic system, get the tank pumped regularly and keep the lateral lines clear and protected. Other than regular pumping, carefully consider what you put down your tank and get your entire household on board with this. Avoid using additives.

We asked Piper Satterfield at BBB Septic to set us straight and de-bunk a few top myths she has heard during her time in the onsite wastewater industry:

Myth #1: Don't pump the tank until you have a problem.

Pumping out the tank gets rid of any solids that have built up over time. If the solids layers are too thick, then they get pushed out into the absorption lines and this degrades the septic field. This typically leads to the lines needing to be replaced. When lines are replaced, that means a new soil test, septic system permit, and installation must be completed.

Myth #2: I don't need to pump my tank because I use Rid-X.

The use of additives does not remove the need to have your septic tank pumped out regularly. Neither does the addition of yeast, buttermilk, a cup of sugar, a dead chicken, a dead opossum, (and, yes– we have seen this). Your body produces all of the natural bacteria needed to make the tank do its best work, but the tank still fills up with undigested solids over time.

Myth #3: Greywater doesn't go into the septic system.

If the system was properly designed and installed, then every sink, toilet, washing machine, dishwasher, bathtub and shower should drain into the septic system. In Arkansas, all greywater is required to be placed in subsurface for treatment.

Myth #4: What I flush goes away forever.

We can see the grease, wipes, tampons, toy cars, teddy bears, barbie heads, and everything in between that is sent down the drain. Sometimes removal of these items can end up costing extra during routine pumping, if it doesn't cause a failure. Chemicals put into septic tanks that don't easily break down can contaminate the groundwater.



Cost Share for Septic System Maintenance and Repairs Opens to Entire 5-County Area

By Henny Calloway, CSWCD Conservation Specialist II

All residents of the District are now eligible for reimbursement of fifty percent of the expense of pumping, maintaining, repairing or replacing on-lot septic systems. The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District has received additional funding to expand their current septic system program to the target areas of the five county conservation district not previously eligible (Culpeper, Greene, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock Counties). This program is focused on reducing any existing or potential impacts on local ground and surface water quality. E. Coli bacteria in some local streams has long been identified as being higher than expected by state water quality standards, although other pollutants can also be involved, particularly nutrients. An additional benefit to the property owner is the assurance that their system is up to standards and functioning properly. It is a win-win for both water quality and property value. This grant complements several others already in existence by expanding the options to the entire District.

Program participants are eligible for several different payments depending on the actual needs of their system. Reimbursement payments are typically fifty percent although can go as high as eighty percent for individuals that qualify for low income status. Maximum payments to property owners under average income levels are:

- \$225 max towards a pump out (up to \$360 low income)
- \$3,250 max towards a pump out and inspection (up to \$5,200 low income)
- \$3,750 max towards a repair (up to \$6,000 low income)
- \$6,250 max towards a conventional system (up to \$10,000 low income)
- \$8,250 max if a pump is required to move the liquids to the drain field (up to \$13,200 low income)
- \$15,750 maximum towards an alternative engineered system (up to \$25,200 low income)
- \$6,250 maximum towards connection to public sewer (up to \$10,000 low income)

Pump outs and inspections are encouraged by everyone; such preventative maintenance extends the life of a system and prevents higher costs later on if the systems fail. If further repairs are indicated by the inspection, the owner is still eligible for the additional repair payments. Applications are required and need to be approved prior to the work being done or funding can be declined. Free assistance with initial assessments of individual system needs is available from the District. Reimbursement payments are made promptly once the work has been completed.

The program is entirely voluntary and assistance from the District is free of charge. Funding is available on a first come first serve basis while the supply lasts. Further information on the program is available from the District at (540) 825-8591 or (540) 948-7531. Funding for these projects has been secured by the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Non Point Source Program, Commonwealth of Virginia.

Students Chosen for Summer Camps

Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District supported four students to attend Camp Woods and Wildlife held June 15-19 at the Holiday Lake 4-H Center in Appomattox, Virginia.

The students representing the District were:

- Magnolia Carter (Floyd T. Binns MS)
- Bridget Hayes (William Wetsel MS)
- David Marshall (Locust Grove MS)
- Zoey Stuart (Floyd T. Binns MS)

Avoid Overgrazing Spring Forage

By: Trevor Talley, Conservation Specialist II

As spring temperatures begin to rise, landowners in our area begin to see the cool season grasses start to “green up” and experience growth. However, landowners and operators are not the only ones noticing. Livestock are quick to notice their more desirable forage after feeding on dry hay/forage throughout the winter. The forages experiencing growth during the spring are fescue, orchardgrass and perennial clovers. To eliminate risk of harming permanent forages, landowners should avoid overgrazing their cool season species during the spring. Issues that arise from overgrazing include shorter lifespan of desired grasses, undesirable weed pressure and higher feed costs during the year.

During the growing season if cattle have free roam to the pasture, they tend to eat “dessert” (desirable forage) first. Overgrazing can cause shorter lifespans of cool season forages because of the effects it has on their root structures. The more forages are overgrazed the more vulnerable these plants are to drought and heat stresses. These forages also need leaf area to perform photosynthesis and if they’re constantly being overgrazed, the regrowth period is greatly reduced. One way to mitigate overgrazing is to create permanent or temporary division fences within your pastures to allow areas to rest and enhance regrowth.

When overgrazing is happening, undesirable weed pressure will likely be prominent. These undesirable weeds include perilla mint, pig weed, cocklebur, buttercup, etc. These species generally take over when they have less grass to compete against or when there is bare ground. The invasive weeds are often toxic to cattle or do not offer any nutritional value.

Feed costs will rise for the producer when cattle “mow through” their grass species early in the spring. A producer could expect to begin feeding hay from October through March if pasture is not given rest. Supplement hay may also have to be given during drought scenarios when grass can’t recoup during the constant grazing. Scenarios like this get costly for an operation when they’re constantly purchasing hay.

Overgrazing is a common occurrence in our pastures that a producer can mitigate by utilizing division fence and giving their fields rest. Favorable vegetation can have a longer lifespan and can suppress weeds when giving ample opportunity to have regrowth. Producers can experience lower feed costs and help their operation become more profitable.

Resources:

[https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture-Ranchers Guide to Grassland Management IV \(R1707\)](https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture-Ranchers%20Guide%20to%20Grassland%20Management%20IV%20(R1707))

https://www.lancasterfarming.com/farming-news/livestock/avoid-overgrazing-this-spring-with-smarter-grazing-strategies/article_d8287da5-1c63-5994-a8bb-4ece71f838a5.html



Students Recognized with College Scholarships

Each year, the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District awards up to \$10,000 in educational scholarships to students who plan to pursue a career in a conservation-related field. These scholarships are available to eligible students living in the five-county area the Culpeper SWCD serves — Culpeper, Greene, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock.

This year, Culpeper SWCD chose to recognize five students with \$2,000 each. Eligible individuals are full time students enrolled in, or who have applied to, a college undergraduate or graduate program in an area that supports soil and water conservation, natural resource management, environmental science or a related field.

The 2026 Scholarship Recipients are:

- Grace Faulk graduated from Fauquier High School and lives in Culpeper. She will attend Virginia Tech, where she will major in Dairy Science (Laura Campbell Memorial Scholarship).
- Holly Savage graduated from Eastern View High School. She attends Virginia Tech, where her major will be Agriculture Education and Horticulture (John Boldridge Memorial Scholarship).
- Isaac Plaksin graduated from Rappahannock County High School. He will attend Skidmore College, where he will major in Environmental Studies.
- Declan FT Perrot graduated from Rappahannock County High School. He will attend the University of New Hampshire, where he will major in Marine, Estuarine and Freshwater Biology.
- Ilyana Rodriguez graduated from Eastern View High School. She will attend Virginia Tech, where she will major in Sustainable Systems Science.

Culpeper SWCD wishes these students the best in their future endeavors.



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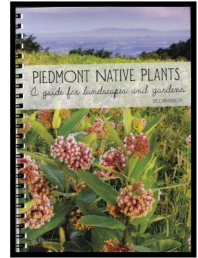
- Finding lost people, pets and livestock
- Trespasser & poacher deterrence (Thermal or visual cameras can locate unwanted guest)
- Deer management surveys (Fall & winter) Leaf off is needed for accurate analysis
- Deer scouting
- Finding harvested deer (All hunting stops for the day once drone operations begin)
- Mapping & Inspections

 **Back 40 Drone Worx**

Woods & Wildlife Information

Hot Off the Press: Piedmont Native Plants 2nd Edition!

The Second Edition of Piedmont Native Plants is available for purchase through our office for \$20. This beautiful, full color resources includes pictures, descriptions and growing needs for wildflowers, ground covers, ferns, shrubs short trees, tall trees and edibles. To purchase, email Stephanie DeNicola at stephanied@culpeperswcd.org. Check or exact cash accepted.



State Arboretum Seeks Butternuts

by T'ai Roulston, Curator & Research Associate Professor,
State Arboretum at Blandy
Reprinted with permission

The State Arboretum at Blandy is in search for butternut trees in Virginia. Butternuts (also called white walnut) are declining rapidly due in large part to butternut canker disease, an introduced fungal pathogen that causes black fissures to erupt over the tree's trunk, eventually killing it. Here at the arboretum, we are trying to document the health of existing trees over diverse areas in Virginia and propagate ones from a geographically wide range.

The Arboretum is interested in butternut trees in Culpeper, Madison and Rappahannock Counties. If you see the nuts, please take a picture and email tai.roulston@virginia.edu to confirm identification. It is challenging to identify the tree from photos without nuts. The grand hope is to find some butternuts resistant to the blight somewhere out there, and maybe you can point us to one.



Have a tree species you would like to see in our annual sale?
E-mail Stephanie DeNicola at stephanied@culpeperswcd.org.

Residential Information

Backyard Conservation Funds Available

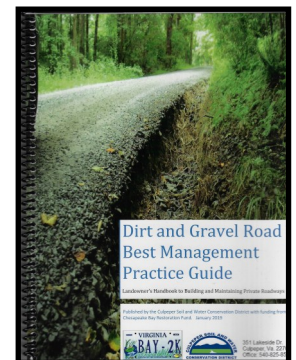
By Richard Jacobs, III, PE, CSWCD Conservation Specialist III

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.

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.

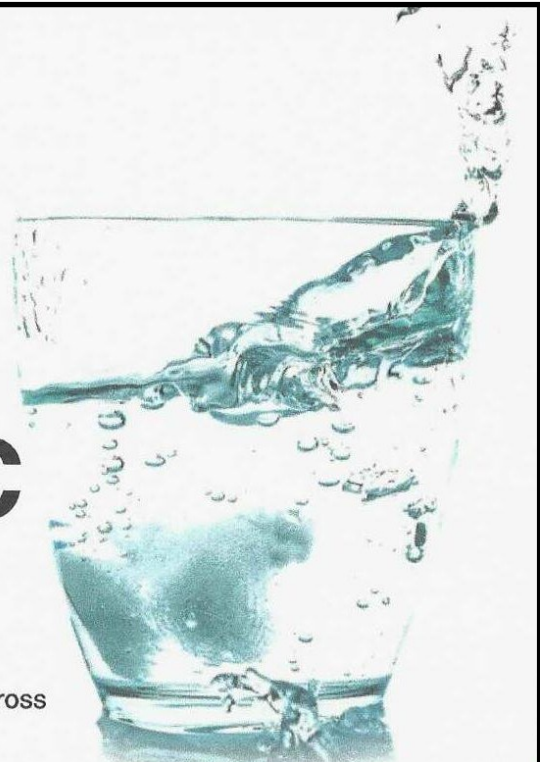



Rain Barrel Sale!

A new order of rain barrels will arrive soon! Prices are not confirmed yet. For more information, contact Stephanie DeNicola at (540) 825-8591 or send an email to: stephanied@culpeperswcd.org.


FREE LAWN SOIL TESTS ARE STILL AVAILABLE!
CONTACT STEPHANIE DENICOLA AT
stephanied@culpeperswcd.org for info!

Partner Spotlight





**Virginia
Cooperative
Extension**
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University



Virginia
Household
Water Quality
Program

2026 WELL WATER TESTING CLINIC

**Rely on a well, spring, or cistern?
Check your water quality.**

Virginia Cooperative Extension offers low-cost water testing clinics across the state through the Virginia Household Water Quality Program (VAHWQP).

Testing includes 28 chemical and bacteriological constituents including:

<p>✓ Heavy Metals & Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arsenic • Copper • Iron • Lead • Manganese 	<p>✓ Water Quality Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardness • pH • Total dissolved solids (TDS) 	<p>✓ Chemicals & Nutrients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluoride • Nitrate • Sulfate 	<p>✓ Bacteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coliform bacteria • E. coli bacteria <p>✓ Plus more!</p>
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Well Water testing clinics for all of the Culpeper District

- June 3, 2026
 - ◊ Greene: Sarah Sharpe seweaver@vt.edu (434) 985-5236
 - ◊ Madison: Greg Lillard glillard14@vt.edu (540) 948-6881
 - ◊ Orange: Clare Lillard lclare4@vt.edu (540) 672-1361
- July 15, 2026
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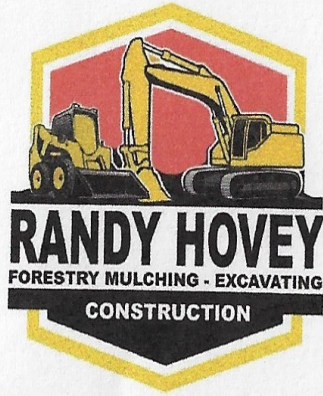
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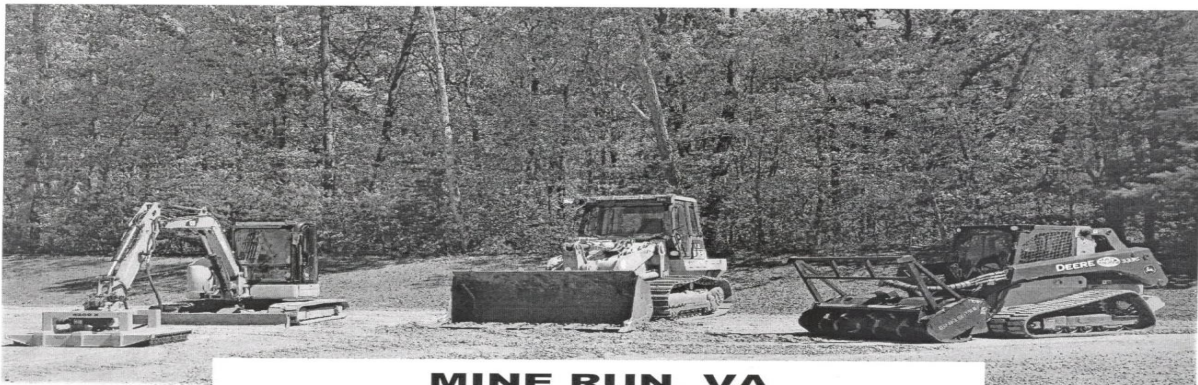
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