



The Piedmonteer

Newsletter of the Piedmont Soil & Water Conservation District
Serving Amelia, Nottoway and Prince Edward Counties

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2011 VASWCD ANNUAL MEETING SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Wilkie Chaffin, right, was honored with the Bobby Wilkerson award December 6, 2011

Dr. Wilkie Chaffin accepted the Virginia Association of Conservation District's (VASWCD) highest honor at their annual meeting held December 5-6 at the Omni Richmond Hotel. Director John Peterson, above left, presented the R.E. "Bobby" Wilkinson Award to Dr. Chaffin to a standing ovation at the VASWCD Awards Banquet. This award is given annually to a director of vision and determination in the service of the VASWCD.

Dr. Chaffin's wife Dora, above center, donated a quilt she made that was auctioned at the VASWCD Education Foundation fundraiser.

Director Ricky Rash, President of the VASWCD Education Foundation, presented awards to two VA district employees for outstanding educational programming.

TMDL Conservation Specialist Charlie Wootton received his "five-years-of-service" pin at the VASWCD Employee Luncheon.

Piedmont SWCD District Manager Deanna Fehrer, right, introduced District Showcase videos at the Opening Session.



An exciting new partnership was announced at the meeting with the presentation of a check from Dominion Foundation to the Virginia Envirothon for \$42,000 dollars. The Dominion Foundation grant funds will be used throughout 2012 in support of the six Area Envirothon competitions, several training workshops, as well as funding for the entire state two-day competition. At the meeting, Envirothon resource kits were distributed to all 47 conservation districts in Virginia.



Directors Bill Powers and Wilkie Chaffin display check from Dominion to VA Envirothon for \$42,000. Directors Larkin Moyer and Chuck Arnason also attended the annual meeting.

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The Piedmonteer is published from the office of the Piedmont SWCD. Its purpose is to keep conservation partners informed of events, news and information promoting soil and water stewardship.

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POULTRY PRODUCER HARVESTS THE RAIN



Seven partners were recognized for their participation in an innovative rainwater harvesting project at a Virginia Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society meeting held October 20, 2011 in Charlottesville, VA. Thanks to the success of this partnership, a commercial poultry producer in Prince Edward County is successfully harvesting rainwater from his poultry house roofs, storing it in an underground tank, and using it in evaporative cooling units during the summer months to keep his poultry cool. Rainwater harvesting can reduce demand on well water and reduce runoff from the farm.

Many people and considerable time and money were involved in making this brainchild of former Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent Brent Clayton a reality. In 2009 Clayton's idea to harvest rainwater at the commercial level was embraced by Laurel Woodworth of the Center for Watershed Protection in Charlottesville. Laurel leveraged grant money from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Altria, Dennis Jones of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Farmville secured EQIP funds, and Dewitt Goin, owner and operator of Bell Creek Farms where the system was installed, helped pay for the rainwater harvesting system.

In September 2011 District Manager Deanna Fehrer of the Piedmont SWCD organized a farm tour to promote the benefits of rainwater harvesting to area poultry producers. Participants were treated to lunch, informative presentations by project coordinators, and a bus ride to Bell Creek Farm to see the system onsite. Forty-

three producers participated and several expressed interest in applying for similar cost-share.

Longwood University professor Dr. David Buckalew, who tests the stored rainwater for bacteria, presented his findings at the tour noting that, "The harvested rainwater from the poultry house roof has significantly lower levels of bacteria than any of the stream samples we take in Prince Edward County". The stored rainwater will continue to be monitored to determine if the stored rainwater can possibly be used as a source of drinking water for animals on the farm.



Conservation Society award winners left to right, David Buckalew, Dewitt Goin and son Travis, Deanna Fehrer and Dennis Jones at the October Piedmont SWCD board meeting.

David Buckalew and Dewitt Goin were unable to attend the Soil and Water Conservation Society meeting in September so they received their merit awards at the Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors meeting October 2011.

To see a video based on the Bell Creek Farm project go to our website: www.piedmontswcd.org And look for Rainwater Harvesting Video.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Funding for the Piedmont SWCD **TMDL program is due to expire on June 30, 2012.** Livestock producers wishing to exclude their animals from streams and install a grazing system are encouraged to take advantage of the TMDL program now. With the current budget situation, there is no guarantee this program will be available after June. **Eligible producers can receive up to 85% cost-share** for exclusion fence, well, pipeline and water troughs. In addition, cost-share is available for cross fencing in conjunction with a prescribed grazing plan. **Technical assistance** by the Piedmont SWCD Conservation Specialists is **available at no cost**, even if producers do not receive cost share. Contact Whitney Foster at (434) 392-3782 ext.132 or Charlie Wootton at ext.134 for more information.



BMP TAX CREDIT LAW CHANGES

Until July 2011 the Virginia's Agricultural BMP Tax Credit program allowed "carry overs" of excess tax credits. That means an individual entitled to a tax credit for more than his tax bill for the year the credits were earned could carry any excess credit over and apply it to his tax bill in the following 5 years until the total amount of the tax credit was taken.

Starting July 1, 2011 the law changed. Now, an individual who earns tax credit in one year may no longer carry over excess credits. Instead, the individual is entitled to a tax refund of the amount by which his total tax credit exceeds the amount of his total Virginia tax bill for that year.

To ensure that you properly apply the new rules to your specific situation, it is recommended that you consult your own tax advisor.

TAKE A WILDLIFE QUIZ



Match animals to description. Use each animal once. Answers below. Pictures courtesy of Wikipedia.



1. I have a prehensile tail.

2. I am a diurnal omnivore.

3. I can see, but rely on echolocation.

4. I am a crepuscular herbivore.

5. I am a subterranean insectivore.

6. I am an excellent fisher.



Bonus Question—What three characteristics do all of these animals have in common?

Wildlife Quiz Answers

1. Opossum 2. Squirrel 3. Bat 4. Deer 5. Mole
6. Raccoon 7. All are mammals, and all mammals have 1. Hair,
2. Milk producing glands and 3. Three bones for hearing.



Piedmont Soil & Water Conservation District

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Mission

The mission of the Piedmont SWCD is to provide technical, educational and financial resources to citizens of the Piedmont SWCD in order to promote the conservation of soil, water and related resources.

Meetings

The Piedmont SWCD Board of Directors meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month except in December. The meetings are held in the Prince Edward County Agricultural and Natural Resources Building conference room located on 100 Dominion Drive in Farmville, Virginia. The public is invited to attend these meetings.

FARMING?

WE WANT TO MEET YOU!

Join your Ag Partners for **Supper,**
Cost-Share Opportunities & Program Updates

Tuesday, **January 31, 6:30 PM**
 Prince Edward Ag and Natural Resources Building
 Register by Friday, January 27

Tuesday, **February 7, 6:30 PM**
 Amelia Presbyterian Church, Amelia, VA
 Register by Friday, February 3

Thursday, **February 16, 6:30 PM**
 Southern Piedmont Research Station, Blackstone, VA
 Register by Tuesday, February 14

Registration is free but required for supper!

To register phone 434.392-3782 ext 132