



CONSERVATION MATTERS

Newsletter of the Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District



Winter 2014

Serving Amelia, Nottoway and Prince Edward Counties

IF YOU GROW IT, WE CAN HELP! COME HAVE BREAKFAST WITH US:

MEET AND TALK WITH STAFF FROM

- AMELIA, NOTTOWAY AND PRINCE EDWARD VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
- PIEDMONT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
- FARM SERVICES AGENCY
- NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
- VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

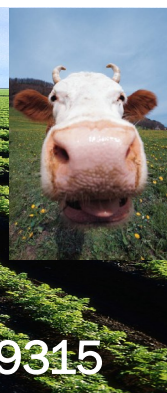
DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2014

**LOCATION: SOUTHERN PIEDMONT AREC
2375 DARVILLS ROAD, BLACKSTONE**

TIME: 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM

RSVP AND REGISTER BY: JANUARY 31, 2014

NOTTOWAY EXTENSION OFFICE AT 434-645-9315



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FARMVILLE, VA 23901
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Communications

Conservation Matters 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. Editor-Robin Buckalew

Virginia's efforts to keep excess nutrients and sediments from flowing into our rivers and Bay are getting results. Conservation Districts are assisting farmers and homeowners with their stewardship activities and this is helping reduce pollution and improve water quality. The ability of conservation districts to broadly help put conservation practices, or best management practices (BMPs) on the ground depends on having enough, stable funding from the General Assembly. Funding pays for cost-share BMPs and technical assistance staff salaries.

The 2014 Virginia General Assembly Session is set to convene January 8. Legislators will be deciding how much funding will be made available to support agricultural BMPs, Stormwater Management and Waste Water Treatment. Two Piedmont SWCD Directors plan to meet with Legislators on January 13 to argue for increased funding for districts. Directors Ricky Rash and Wilkie Chaffin, along with other district directors from across the state, will be in Richmond to emphasize that investing in the Commonwealth's water will keep Virginia on track to meet its commitments to improving water quality.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



Laura Siegle
Piedmont SWCD 2013

Outstanding Conservation Educator

Presented by NRCS District Conservationist Derek Hancock, left. Ms. Siegle, the Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent in Amelia County, initiated an impressive education outreach program in her first year on the job.



Delbert Southall
Clean Water Farm Award

Mr. Southall has excluded cattle from the farm's four ponds and installed 4500 feet of stream exclusion fencing. His farm was the site for several training workshops through NRCS and Piedmont SWCD. The Department of Conservation & Recreation's award was presented by Director Dr. Wilkie Chaffin, right.



Robin Buckalew
June Sekoll Media Award
VA Chapter, Soil and Water
Conservation Society

Presented by Society President Erin Lin, right. The Society advocates the protection, enhancement, and wise use of soil, water and related natural resources, and through education and example, promotes an ethic that recognizes the interdependence of people and the environment.



Kevin Dunn,
Five-Years of Service

Piedmont SWCD BMP Conservation Technician Kevin Dunn was honored at the V A Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting for 5 years of service. He is pictured here with his family sharing homemade Christmas goodies.



Dennis Jones, NRCS District Conservationist announced his retirement and had his official final day at the office January 2, 2014. Paula Totten with NRCS will be acting DC until a replacement is hired.

All programs and services of the Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, handicap or political affiliation.

AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

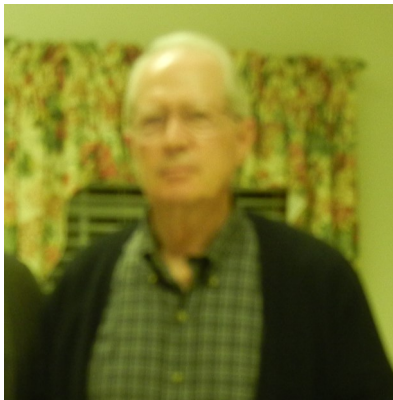
Piedmont SWCD Agriculture Awards



Richard Flippin

Wildlife Conservationist

Mr. Flippin has provided wildlife habitat for years including habitat corridors and meadows throughout his timber stands. The quail habitat he created by planting VA-70 Lespedeza is the largest known acreage implemented by a private landowner in Amelia County.



Preston Wilson

Outstanding Forestry Farmer

Mr. Wilson works with the Department of Forestry when harvesting his timber to make sure the loggers follow good Best Management Practices. Mr. Wilson did a reforestation through DOF and installed wildlife field borders. He manages the area with a combination of prescribed fire, bush hogging and herbicide application.



Eric Watkins

Young Conservation Farmer

In two projects on the dairy farm that Mr. Watkins operates with his father, a total of 7,666 feet of stream bank exclusion fencing was installed. To manage the herd movement on the farm a 1750 square foot culvert was installed. In another location, a 1,960 square foot walking trail was installed to further manage the



Watt Gills

Outstanding Conservation Farmer, Amelia County

Mr. Gills installed 9,850 feet of cattle exclusion fencing at his own expense, before being reimbursed thru a later program. An additional 9,142 feet of cattle exclusion fencing was also installed on the farm.



**Donald Bracey, left,
Outstanding Conservation
Farmer, Nottoway County**

Mr. Bracey has installed 14,033 feet of stream and pond exclusion fencing thru partnerships with Piedmont SWCD and NRCS. His 80 head of cattle are completely fenced out of the streams and ponds, and now water from an alternative watering system that includes eight troughs placed throughout the farms rotational grazing system.



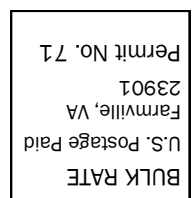
Charlie Wootton

Piedmont SWCD Senior Conservation Specialist was selected to represent the Virginia Association of Conservation Districts on the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Agriculture Technical Committee for a three year term.

Address Service Requested

100 B Dominion Drive
Farmville, Virginia 23901

PIEDMONT SWCD



YOU CAN MAKE SEED BALLS, as re-invented by Japanese Natural Farming teacher Masanobu Fukuoka. Each of us can help improve the habitat where we live by distributing native wildflowers and grasses. Seed balls are a fun way to add color and life to the environment without digging.

MATERIALS YOU NEED

- 5 parts fine red, dry clay. You can buy red clay from a craft store or dig the clay from the ground. Red, not white or grey clay, has the vital minerals in it that the plants will use when they start to grow. If you dig the clay, first dry it out and then crush the lumps with the bottom of a mug, then sift through a sieve or net to get fine clay particles.
- 3 parts living, non-sterilized compost. The seed will need the tiny micro-organisms in living compost when they start to grow.
- 1 part wildflower seeds – Buy or harvest quality seeds that you know will grow well over a large area or in poor soils, without needing too much attention. Don't choose any plants that will cause ecological or other damage such as invasive species or ones that have destructive root systems. If you're not sure, find out which plants are problem plants for your area or region; don't just rely on general information because some plants might be ideal in their local environment but a rampant pest in yours. For native seed info visit: <http://pollinator.org/PDFs/Guides/SoutheastMixedForestrx5FINAL.pdf>

HOW TO INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a bucket, mix 3 parts live compost and 1 part native plant seeds.
2. Now add in 5 parts dry red clay and mix together.
3. Slowly add about 2 parts water and mix until it is the consistency of cookie dough.
4. Now roll chunks of the mixture between your palms into marble size balls.
6. Put seed balls on a tray or tarp and then let them air dry.
7. When they are finished drying, toss on the ground, at least one seed ball per square foot, preferably when winter weed seeds are dying. If insects and birds are eating seeds, add 10% crushed red chili pepper the next time you make seed balls. For more info about history of & how to visit : <http://permaculturetokyo.blogspot.com/2006/10/seed-balls.html>

