

# Piedmont Soil & Water Conservation District

## Spring 2018 Newsletter



### **Conservation Awards Banquet • Farmville Train Station • February 27, 2018**

**Award winners (L to R):** David Emert, Prince Edward County Supervisor (accepting on behalf of the Prince Edward County Health Department), James Garnett, Jr., Dan Michaelson, Gayle Harris with her son, Harold, in back, Wes Reames, Jay Hackleman

The District's annual conservation awards banquet honors farmers, partners, and educators who have shown a commitment to protecting our community's soil, water, and natural resources. Awardees and guests enjoyed a meal followed by the awards program, which featured videos that showcased their conservation efforts. Each awardee received a framed certificate and a handmade cedar plaque. The District thanks all of the awardees who work to improve soil and water health in Virginia. Special thanks to the Town of Farmville for hosting us at the beautiful Farmville Train Station and to Fuqua Catering for a delicious meal!



## Young Conservation Farmer, Wes Reames

Presented by Director Donna Kerr, Amelia

Through cost-share programs and technical assistance offered by the Piedmont SWCD and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Wes has implemented rotational grazing, planted 10.04 acres of riparian buffer, and installed 10,401 feet of livestock exclusion fence, along with 940 feet of cross fence and 5,265 feet of pipeline to convey water to 6 troughs that the cattle now drink from rather than the farm's creeks and streams. Wes has plenty of sweat equity in the project, having installed all of the fencing himself. He is currently working with NRCS to stabilize bare soil on his farm, so conservation is an ongoing effort on his property. The District recognizes the importance of young farmers who will contribute to local agriculture and natural resource stewardship for years to come.



## Forestry Farmer, Jay Hackleman

Presented by Director Haley Norton, Nottoway

After Jay and his wife Ginny purchased approximately 80 acres in Prospect, VA a few years ago, one of the first things he did was visit the USDA Service Center in Farmville. He collaborated with staff from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to determine which conservation practices he could implement on his land. Jay enrolled in the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) with NRCS to re-establish approximately 16 acres of loblolly pine, as well as 2 acres of mixed hardwoods. He also addressed active soil erosion on the remaining logging roads by establishing annual cover crop for stabilization, followed by a perennial mix for wildlife. His past and continuing conservation efforts show that he is a true steward of the land.



## Conservation Farmer, Gayle Harris

Presented by Director Dr. Wilkie Chaffin, Prince Edward

Gayle Harris, along with her sons, operates a beef cattle farm in Prince Edward County. Through state and federal agricultural cost-share programs, a total of 4.2 miles of stream exclusion fence was installed as well as 8 alternative watering facilities. Additionally, 23.88 acres of forest buffer were planted around the farm's surface waters, therefore slowing and filtering runoff before it reaches the waterways. In addition to installing structural components to improve water quality, the Harris family focused on mending the soil through pasture management. The District applauds Gayle Harris and her family for their multi-generational approach to conservation, which has and will continue to improve soil and water resources.



## Conservation Commitment Farmer, James Garnett, Jr.

Presented by Director Ricky Rash, Nottoway



Over several decades, Jimmy has continually participated in conservation programs through the Piedmont SWCD, NRCS, and FSA. Additionally, he has taken the initiative to voluntarily install conservation practices that were not part of a cost-share program. Some of the projects on his farm include: livestock exclusion from streams; cover crops; prescribed grazing; nutrient management; critical area planting; erosion and sediment control structures; heavy use area protection; long-term vegetative cover on cropland; forest stand improvement; animal trail and walkway installation; and conservation easements. His unwavering dedication to ensuring that

his farm benefits soil and water health merits him the 2017 Conservation Commitment Farmer Award. The District is grateful for his exemplary stewardship over many years.



## Conservation Educator, Dan Michaelson

Presented by Director Bill Powers, Prince Edward

Dan Michaelson has served the Southside Virginia area for over 16 years as an Aquatic Biologist for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. His duties include managing fresh water fisheries in the large and small impoundments and rivers to maintain healthy fish populations. Additionally, he helps with educational events put on by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries as well as those of partner agencies, such as the Piedmont SWCD. He has partnered with the District over many years to assist with environmental summer camp. When asked what he wishes people knew about aquatic conservation, he replied: "I just want people to get outdoors and enjoy Virginia's resources." The District thanks Dan for his dedication to conservation education through his work and for his continued help with environmental summer camp.

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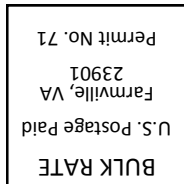
## Conservation Partner

### Prince Edward County Health Department

**Paul Freed, Environmental Health Specialist**

The Prince Edward County Health Department has been a vital partner to the District in the success of our septic system maintenance and repair grant. The grant provides cost-share to residents for septic pump-outs and repairs, and the goal of the program is to protect water quality from pollution from failing septic systems by educating residents and offering financial incentives for proper maintenance. Without the partnership with the Prince Edward County Health Department, the program would not be possible. From the start of the grant in September 2016 until the end of calendar year 2017, the program has allocated funding for 34 pump-outs and 22 repairs. The Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District gives tremendous thanks to the Prince Edward County Health Department for their outstanding work and invaluable partnership.

PIEDMONT SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
100-B DOMINION DRIVE  
FARMVILLE, VA 23901



#### Board of Directors

(L to R): **Chuck Arnason**, Secretary, Nottoway; **Gary Dillard**, Associate Director, Amelia; **Horace Adams**, Associate Director, Prince Edward; **Haley Norton**, VCE Appointed Director, Nottoway; **Dr. Wilkie Chaffin**, Treasurer, Prince Edward; **Donna Kerr**, Director, Amelia; **Bill Powers**, Director, Prince Edward; **Ricky Rash**, Vice Chair, Nottoway; **Larkin Moyer**, Chairman, Amelia; Not pictured: **Juan Whittington**, At-Large Appointed Director, Amelia

**20-year service award: Ricky Rash**

#### Staff

(L to R): **Emily Gibbs**, Residential Conservation Coordinator; **Deanna Fehrer**, District Manager; **Charlie Wootton**, Senior Conservation Specialist; **Kevin Dunn**, Conservation Technician; **Stephen Reames**, Equipment Manager (not pictured)

**15-year service award: Deanna Fehrer**

