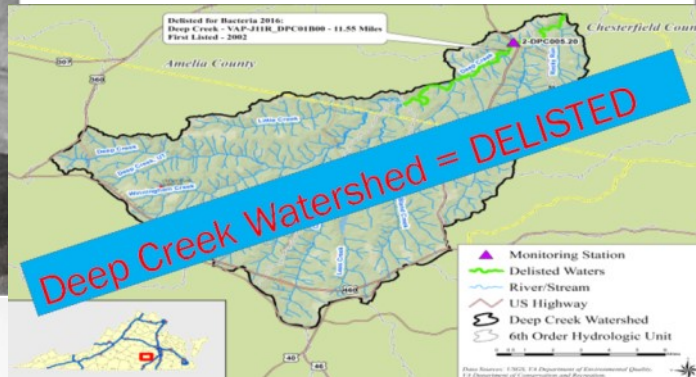


# Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District

## Annual Report 2019-2020

Celebrating 80 years!





# NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

## LARKIN MOYER



This year marked a year of 'firsts' for Piedmont. In 2019 Piedmont SWCD celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> year anniversary, in 2020 the COVID-19 health pandemic hit the globe and our lives changed dramatically, and this year marked the largest influx of funding received for the agriculture best management practices water quality program. Eighty years ago soil and water conservation districts were new across the US and were helping landowners solve soil erosion problems. Piedmont SWCD has been continuing that mission for 80 years! Farmers throughout Virginia are benefitting from the technical expertise of our employees, the strong partnerships with local, state and federal agencies and the increase in funding received over the past several years. This year Covid19 did not slow us down, nor did it hinder the participation in our programs from the farming community. Those programs work to improve water quality and that is evidenced by the delisting from Virginia's impaired waters list, of an 11.55-mile segment of Deep Creek, which is located in Amelia and Nottoway counties. The de-listing means the stream segment now meets water quality standards for bacteria impairments – which in a nutshell, means that Deep Creek is on its way to becoming a healthy body of water. Our District mission is initiated by our eight board members and three associate board members who volunteer their time to serve and our five employees who manage the many programs of our district. I hope you will find in this issue highlights of a successful year! Thank you and Stay Safe!



### **80 Years as a Conservation District**

2019 marked the 80<sup>th</sup> year of Piedmont SWCD. What began as a grassroots effort across the US to protect topsoil from erosion, became a solid conservation program dedicated to helping landowners keep their soil and local waterways healthy.

Piedmont's success over these years is due to folks like you, and today we are continuing many of the conservation principles that founded our organization. For 80 years, Piedmont has worked with thousands of landowners, local governments, schools and

community organizations to help improve water quality, build soil health and protect natural resources. We have also recognized our local heroes of conservation through our awards program and provided 80 years of education programming, resources and assistance to local students, teachers and citizens.

Below is a brief list of our history:

1939 - Piedmont Soil District Organized by Local Farmers

1955 - Conservation Plans Developed for Landowners

1972 - Buffalo Watershed Dams and Stream Improvement Projects Completed in Prince Edward County

1984 - Commonwealth Begins Agricultural Cost Share Program for Farmers

1985 - No-till Planting Equipment Rental Program Began

1995 - Sponsored First Envirothon Team

2015-2018 - Segments of Little Sandy, Flat and Deep Creeks Delisted from Impaired Waters List

2019 - 80 years of Successful Conservation!

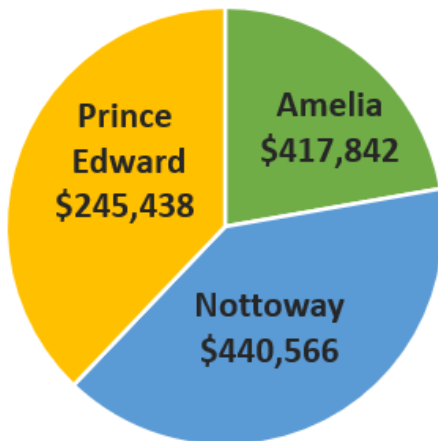


# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District serves Amelia, Nottoway, and Prince Edward Counties. We operate primarily on a grant basis with funds from state and local governments. Some programs we administer are based on watershed location (such as grants only available for Chesapeake Bay residents), while other programs are available to residents in all three counties that we serve. Every two years, an independent audit is performed.

OPERATING BUDGET	FISCAL YEAR 2020
Virginia Dept. of Conservation & Recreation Funds:	
Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) Cost-Share Funds	\$1,057,609
Operations	\$169,880
Agricultural Technical Assistance	\$168,186
Flood control structure maintenance and repairs	\$49,500
Virginia DEQ 319(h) Residential Septic BMP Grants	\$92,060
Other grant-funded projects	\$9,576
Local funds (equipment rental, grants for special projects, locality appropriations, and sponsorships)	\$43,692

**\$1,103,846 Cost-Share Funds Allocated to Landowners (all programs)**



**138**

Cost-share contracts written



**155**

Water Quality Practices Installed



**1,760** students and citizens reached through Envirothon meetings, classroom & educational



**492** Client contacts

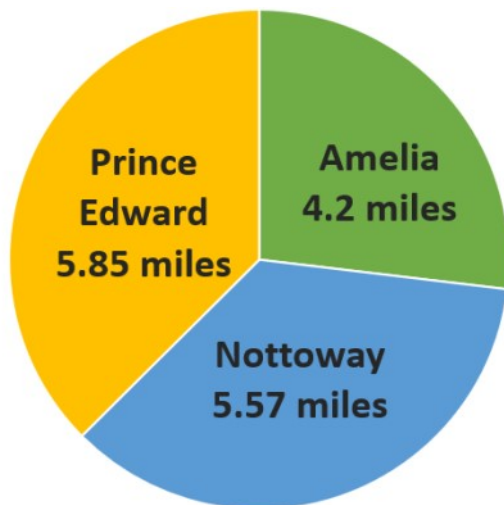
**Keep reading to see the full summary of this year's accomplishments!**

# AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION

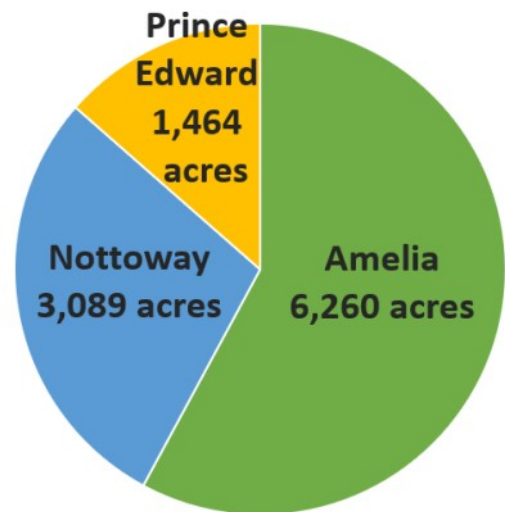
*Piedmont SWCD administers a state grant-funded cost-share program to agricultural producers who install and implement best management practices (BMPs) to improve soil and water quality. Certified, trained staff provide technical assistance to producers by identifying natural resource concerns, providing conservation planning, and ensuring practices are installed and functioning correctly. Technical assistance is always free of charge, and participation in the programs is voluntary.*

409 farm and client visits	17 conservation and grazing plans developed
12.91 acres of streamside buffer planted	\$1,052,192 cost-share funds approved
118 Best Management Practices approved	13,060 acres in a nutrient management plan
1,329 acres planted with no-till drill rental	10 new BMP program participants

15.62 miles of Streambank Protection Installed



10,813 Acres of Cover Crops Planted



Virginia's Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP III) details the best management practices (BMPs) necessary to achieve the nutrient and sediment reductions needed to restore the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries. The objective is to have BMPs in place by 2025 to reach the goal of a clean Chesapeake Bay and local waterways that meet water quality standards!



Based on the BMP implementation levels and experiences over the last several years, it is clear that Virginia's reduction goals for 2025 are ambitious and will require significant effort, funding and technical capacity. As part of this effort, Piedmont SWCD received a record \$1,057,609 of cost share funding for FY 20. In addition there were significant changes to the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share (VACS) program. These changes include increasing VACS participant caps to \$100,000 per year, more flexible carryover guidelines to enable farmers to complete BMP installations, a greater variety of options for livestock stream exclusion and animal waste control facilities. Thanks to the cooperation of our producers and hard work of our field staff, all of our cost share funds were allocated!



## Welcome Equipment Manager Brendan Burke

Brendan is a native of Amelia County and is the fifth generation to live on their farm, Glendale. He is a graduate of Longwood University and William & Mary and in his former life excavated shipwrecks off the Florida coast and documented the commercial shrimp industry. When not exploring Virginia's waterways, Brendan is happy to reconnect to his agricultural roots through the District drill rental program. Contact Brendan at (804) 704-5909 for your drill rental needs and questions.



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## Agricultural Cost Share Signup

We are now accepting applications for the agricultural best management practices (BMPs) cost-share program. The program provides financial incentives, tax credits, and technical assistance to agricultural producers who voluntarily install conservation practices on their farm to improve water quality. Benefits include decreased erosion, increased soil organic matter, cleaner streams, and healthier animals.

This program year offers several new options for excluding livestock from streams and re-enrollment of several practices. The program also offers **rotational grazing practices, cover crops, long term vegetative cover on cropland, nutrient management and animal waste practices.**

To find out more information or to schedule an appointment with staff, contact Charlie Wootton at 434-392-3782 ext. 128 or Kevin Dunn at 434-392-3782 ext. 116.

# RESIDENTIAL CONSERVATION

*Piedmont SWCD administers two grants from the Department of Environmental Quality to provide financial assistance to homeowners for a percentage of the costs of septic system pump outs, repairs, and replacements. The program also educates residents about proper septic system care and about the environmental and health impacts of failing septic systems. Applicants must live in the Flat, Nibbs, Deep, or West Creek watersheds in Nottoway and Amelia Counties, or the Spring Creek, Briery Creek, Sandy River, Bush River, or Saylers Creek watersheds in Prince Edward County. Contact the District to find out what watershed you*



22 site visits (in partnership with local Health Department staff)

32 Best Management Practices approved:

16 tank pump-outs, 14 repairs, 2 alternative systems

\$56,880 cost-share funds approved

*The photo above shows a septic tank pump-out in progress. The Virginia Department of Health recommends pumping your septic tank every 5-7 years to properly maintain it. Not performing routine maintenance can cause a buildup of solids, which could clog the drainfield lines, resulting in a costly system replacement.*

## Goats help control Kudzu at Fuqua School



This past May, with the help of a grant from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, 40 adult female and 62 baby goats were placed at Fuqua School. The goats stayed 4 1/2 days to eat the Kudzu in the riparian buffer along Grosses Creek. Approximately, 1600 feet of riparian buffer along Grosses Creek were treated by the goats. The riparian buffer is important to the health of the water which is part of the James River Watershed. Healthy trees and vegetation along the creek keep the water cooler, which allows for a diversity of organisms to thrive and a healthier ecosystem. Vegetation also holds the soil in place resulting in reduced erosion and less sediment in the stream channel.

The use of goats to slow the spread of Kudzu is a form of integrated pest management (IPM). This form of treatment eliminates the need for chemicals. Although the goats will not fully eradicate the aggressive vine in one visit, they will eat the plant to the ground exposing the rhizome root allowing for easier control and future treatments. At Fuqua school, the follow-up plan included mowing and weed-eating the area to prevent the Kudzu vine from over-topping and killing the trees.





# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

*Education for youth and adults is a key initiative for Piedmont SWCD. Youth education includes classroom programs, Envirothon program, camps, poster contest, interactive displays, and scholarships to continue higher education. Adult education consists of exhibits at public events, newspaper and radio releases, social media outreach, and workshops.*

COVID-19 caused many of our programs to be canceled such as, Youth Conservation Camp, Ag Days, Envirothon workshop and competition, and numerous school programs.

Our education outreach continues by providing teachers and parents with virtual resources via interactive news letters, email and our Facebook page.

The following programs were completed prior to the COVID-19 outbreak:

- ♦ Academic Scholarships: Provided four (4) \$1,000 college scholarships
- ♦ Education in schools and community: Family Farm Day, farm tour for Longwood University students, classroom programs at Fuqua School and Full Circle School, partnered with local beekeepers to present to Girl Scouts, soil patch workshop for Girl Scouts, judged Science Fair at Prince Edward County Middle School, presentation at Nottoway Middle School Career Day
- ♦ Poster Contest: "Where Would We BEE Without Pollinators" - 246 student entries (Overall winners pictured here)



Natasha Carricato (1st)      Lexi Cook (2nd)      Aurelia Barber (3rd)

- ♦ Envirothon: held 3 training sessions at the Amelia-Nottoway Technical Center, topics included: BMP's, Soils & Wildlife
- ♦ Youth Conservation Camp – Canceled due to COVID-19. Looking forward to YCC in 2021!

## Adult Education

- ♦ Organized and sponsored Pollinator workshop for area educators
- ♦ Provided pollinator exhibit at Richlands Dairy Fall Farm Festival
- ♦ Presented at Nutrient Management trainings
- ♦ Class program and farm tour for Longwood Environmental Science class
- ♦ Exhibited at Winter Forage Meeting
- ♦ Wrote and administered Kudzu removal grant (using goats at Fuqua School)

During Family Farm Day, participants learned about the importance of the layers in healthy soil as they crawled through a soil tunnel and felt as if they were going underground.



*Pictured here Charlie Wootton prepared to promote observations of the "soils surface."*

## Lindy Hamlett Scholarship Recipients



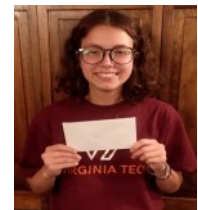
Madison Barnard  
Amelia Co.



Rebekah Morgan Cole  
Amelia Co.



Paul Moore  
Amelia Co.



Almeyda Vermillion  
Nottoway Co.



# WATERSHED DAMS

*Piedmont SWCD is responsible for maintaining and meeting the safety regulations of 14 flood control dams in Prince Edward County. These dams are designed for watershed protection and flood prevention. All dams have an approved Emergency Action Plan that is utilized during significant storm events.*



Conducted 35 inspections (storm events, repair projects, annual inspections, and engineering.

Performed routine mowing, debris removal, and other maintenance

Attended 2 dam owner workgroup seminars

Piedmont SWCD, with funding from Department of Conservation & Recreation, awarded a statewide engineering contract for needed repairs to SWCD maintained dams throughout VA. Many of the 104 SWCD maintained dams are beyond or approaching their 50-year lifespan, and the engineering designs will enable SWCDs to correct and repair dam infrastructure such as wave berms, inflow devices, seepage and other corrections needed to obtain regular operating certificates. In response to the 2018 Hurricane Michael storm, VA SWCDs have

received funding to install remote monitoring equipment on several High Hazard dams, which will allow real-time monitoring of water levels during a storm event. More information will be shared in 2021!



## VALUED PARTNERSHIPS

### CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

- USDA Farm Service Agency
- USDA NRCS-  
Horace Adams, Derek Hancock  
Robert Hazlegrove, Rachel  
Loveday, Olivia Plant
- VA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation
- VA Dept. of Environmental Quality
- VA Dept. of Forestry-  
Doug Audley, Patrick Murphy,  
Kirby Woolfolk
- VA Cooperative Extension-  
Haley Norton, Katy Overby,  
Laura Siegle
- VA Dept. of Wildlife Resources
- Virginia Association of Soil and Water  
Conservation Districts
- VA Forage & Grasslands Council

### YOUTH EDUCATION

- Amelia Ruritans — sponsors
- Amelia County High School
- Full Circle Nature School
- Fuqua School
- Girl Scouts
- Heart of Virginia Beekeepers
- Longwood University
- Prince Edward County Middle School

### POSTER CONTEST

- Brooke Eamigh, Joy Utzinger-Prince  
Edward County Elementary School
- Audrey Sullivan

### MEDIA SUPPORT

- Amelia Bulletin-Monitor
- Farmville Herald
- Southside Messenger
- Blackstone Courier Record
- WFLO
- WVHL

### LOCAL PARTNERS

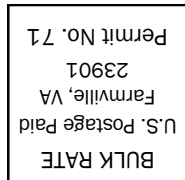
Amelia, Nottoway, and Prince Edward County-

- Board of Supervisors
- Administrative staff
- Farm Bureau Agencies
- Health Department staff
- Heart of VA Master Gardeners
- Master Naturalists
- Middle James Roundtable
- Southern Piedmont Agriculture  
Research Extension Center
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation

**Thank you to the many partners who participated in and supported Piedmont SWCD programs this year. We look forward to expanding our partnerships in the coming year!**

**Confirm you received this report with a simple "hi" email to [piedmontswcd@gmail.com](mailto:piedmontswcd@gmail.com). Or comment on it from our Facebook page. All who respond will be entering into a drawing for a prize. Drawing will be on October 30, 2020.**





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



## DIRECTORS

**LARKIN MOYER**  
Chairman - Amelia County  
**RICKY RASH**  
Vice Chair - Nottoway County  
**DR. WILKIE CHAFFIN**  
Treasurer - Prince Edward Co.  
**CHUCK ARNASON**  
Secretary - Nottoway County  
**ALLISON CREWS**  
Amelia County  
**BILL POWERS**  
Prince Edward County  
**JUAN WHITTINGTON**  
Amelia County - Appointed  
**HALEY NORTON**  
Nottoway County - VCE Appointed

## ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

**GARY DILLARD**  
Amelia County  
**SARAH ECK**  
Nottoway County  
**HORACE ADAMS**  
Prince Edward County

## DISTRICT STAFF

**DEANNA FEHRER** ext. 108  
District Manager  
**CHARLIE WOOTTON** ext. 128  
Senior Conservation Specialist  
**KEVIN DUNN** ext. 116  
BMP Conservation Technician  
**STEPHEN REAMES**  
Equipment Program Coordinator  
**KELLY ATKINSON** ext. 132  
Education Coordinator

Office: (434) 392-3782  
Website: [piedmontswcd.org](http://piedmontswcd.org)

## DISTRICT STAFF



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Check us out on Facebook

