

Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District

Annual Report 2020-2021



CONSERVATION DURING A PANDEMIC



Fuqua MS



Full Circle School



Prince Edward MS



Nottoway Co HS



Sunrise Learning Center



Amelia Co HS



Kentson Forest School



Sunrise Learning Center



Fuqua US



Cover Crops
 Improving Soil and Water Quality
Piedmont
 Soil & Water Conservation District
 434-392-3782



NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

LARKIN MOYER



They say 'change' is constant and this year was no exception. The Piedmont SWCD experienced many changes this year – both temporary and permanent. The Covid19 pandemic affected our daily operations and relationships, and required that we adjust our work environment. 'Zoom' became the new buzz word and allowed our Board to continue to do business by offering virtual options for members, staff, partners and the public to attend safely. Our employees utilized remote access to office computer programs and files which allowed several of our staff the ability to continue to provide

conservation assistance from the safety of their home. Masks were our new fashion accessory. Our Board experienced a change in our membership with the passing of long-time director, Dr. Wilke Chaffin, but gained a long-time conservationist, Mr. Horace Adams. Chuck Arnason resumed the role of Treasurer and Bill Powers served as Secretary.

Our staff continued to provide top notch service to our farmers, citizens and educators. This year our agricultural conservation cost share program allocated over \$700,000 to soil health and water quality conservation practices, while our residential septic assistance program provided over \$80,000 for pump-outs and repairs to failing systems. Because of these programs, water quality continues to improve. Our District mission is supported by our eight volunteer board members, three associate board members, five employees, numerous partners, but most importantly – you – our citizens who participate in our programs and who advocate for improved water quality. Thank you for taking your time to read about the highlights from our successful year!

Remembering our District Director and Friend – Dr. Wilkie Chaffin

In November the Soil and Water Conservation family said goodbye to long-time Piedmont SWCD Director, Dr. Wilkie Chaffin. Dr. Chaffin began serving on our Board as an Associate Director in 1997 and served as an elected director from 2000 until his passing in 2020.

During those 23 years, he provided outstanding leadership not only on the Piedmont Board, but also to the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) and the 46 other districts across the Commonwealth. He served as the Treasurer of Piedmont SWCD for over 20 years, led the youth education sponsorship program, spearheaded the "Enter Piedmont SWCD" road signage, served the VASWCD board in many leadership roles and led numerous committees and meetings. Conservation, bluegrass music and cars were his passion and



sometimes he combined all three. Not only did he share his talents, skills and passion, he and his wife, Dora, provided generous financial support to District employees in the form of awards and scholarships that will continue through a generous endowment. Dr. Chaffin was recognized for many of his accomplishments during his volunteer conservation 'career', including the National Association of Conservation Districts Hall of Fame award of which he was very proud. He was a humble man who was always ready to help – he will be greatly missed.

Welcome New Director and Long-Time Conservationist – Horace Adams

Mr. Horace Adams is serving the remaining term of Dr. Chaffin. Mr. Adams is a retired Soil Conservation Technician with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and has been involved as a partner with the Piedmont SWCD his entire 38 year career. Mr. Adams has served as an Associate Director on the PSWCD Board over the past four years. He also is a life-long farmer who farmed tobacco and is now a beef cattle and forage producer. Mr. Adams is a resident of Prince Edward County.



OTHER DIRECTOR NEWS

Piedmont SWCD Directors serve not only their local constituents, they are also involved at many state levels. Chuck Arnason is serving as the Chairman of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. Ricky Rash serves as the Legislative Chair of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Allison Crews is an active member of the newly formed Virginia Soil Health Coalition. Directors are also longtime members of PSWCD. Larkin Moyer celebrated his 25 years as a volunteer on the Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District Board. Collectively PSWCD Directors and Associate Directors bring 140 years of PSWCD experience and expertise to the District!

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.

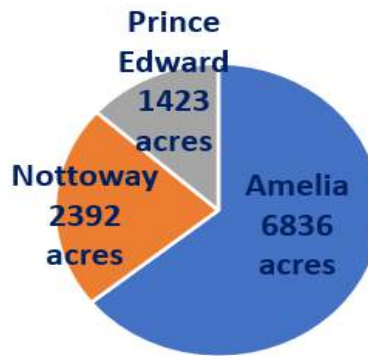
13 conservation and grazing plans developed

\$709,270 cost-share funds approved

8,732 acres enrolled in a nutrient management plan



10,651 Acres of Cover Crops



370 farm and client visits

107 Best Management Practices approved

1,412 acres planted with no-till drill rental

4.3 miles of Streambank Protection Installed



Piedmont SWCD continued to work with farmers and landowners to provide technical assistance and funding opportunities to enhance their operation while improving water quality. Improvements to the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share (VACS) program provided greater flexibility to better serve farming operations, and districts continue to work with farmers and the Department of Conservation &



Recreation to develop changes to improve the program. Thanks to the cooperation of our farmers and landowners, and the hard work of our field staff, we continue to make successful progress toward water quality goals in Virginia.

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. A financial and program audit was conducted this year by an outside accounting firm. Financial operations were found to be conducted in accordance with general accepted accounting principles and with no financial irregularities.

OPERATING BUDGET	FISCAL YEAR 2021
Virginia Dept. of Conservation & Recreation Funds:	
Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) Cost-Share Funds	\$787,998
Operations	\$169,880
Agricultural Technical Assistance	\$102,978
Flood control structure—Maintenance	\$49,500
Repairs	\$47,600
Engineering	\$146,000
Remote Monitoring Systems	\$11,345
Virginia DEQ 319(h) Residential Septic BMP Grants	\$59,968
Other grant-funded projects	\$1,716
Local funds (equipment rental, grants for special projects, locality appropriations, and sponsorships)	\$46,996

\$901,839 Cost-Share Funds Allocated to Landowners (all programs)

141

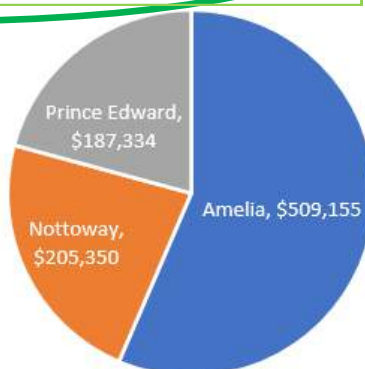


Cost-share contracts written

141



Water Quality Practices Installed



434

Clients Assisted

419



students and citizens reached in educational programs

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

RESIDENTIAL CONSERVATION

Piedmont SWCD secured two new grants from the Department of Environmental Quality to continue the septic financial assistance program. These grants 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 live in. The grant funding will be available until September 2023 or until funding is depleted.

Septic Assistance



Alternative Septic System

Partnership with Amelia, Nottoway and Prince Edward County Health Departments

33 Best Management Practices approved:

13 tank pump-outs, 11 repairs, 2 alternative systems

\$82,518 cost-share funds approved

A BIG THANKS to our partnering health departments for their continued support of the program!

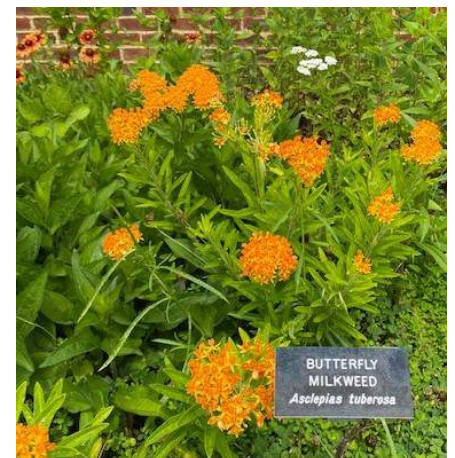
Rainwater Harvesting, Native Plants and More

SWCDs have traditionally provided technical and financial assistance to farmers to install best management practices on their farm. Over the past several years, districts have been working with non-agricultural landowners to install best management practices at their homes. Funding assistance is also provided through a program called Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP). Common practices include conservation landscaping, rain gardens, permeable pavers and rain water harvesting systems. This year Piedmont staff visited 5 homeowners to assist with water runoff and soil erosion issues and helped install a rainwater harvesting system for a homeowner in Nottoway County.



Photo – installation of a rainwater harvesting system in Nottoway (Dr. Gee)

Piedmont SWCD also assists the Heart of VA Master Gardeners with maintenance of a native plant demonstration garden at the Prince Edward County Natural Resource and Agriculture building, located at 100 Dominion Drive, Farmville. Come visit the Piedmont SWCD and tour our native plant garden or visit us virtually on Facebook and view our native plant of the month!



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 or go virtual such as, Youth Conservation Camp (virtual), Ag Days (cancelled) Envirothon workshop and competition (virtual), and numerous school programs.

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

The following programs were able to be completed despite the COVID-19 outbreak:

- ◆ **Academic Scholarships:** Provided three (3) \$1,000 college scholarships
- ◆ **Education in schools and community:** Classroom programs at Kentson Forest School; tree planting with 6th graders at Fuqua School; eight \$500 scholarships were awarded to area schools to help them establish outdoor learning spaces; Gardening 101 class for home school students; in-person watershed training course for the Master Naturalists, partnered with VCE assisted with vernal pools video; created a Flora and Fauna along the James River video (both can be found on our You Tube Channel).
- ◆ **Poster Contest:** “Healthy Forests = Healthy Communities” - 318 student entries (Overall winners pictured here)

Three families (8 students and 3 parents) participated in our nine week long *Gardening 101* class, meeting once a week.

Participants learned plant life cycles, weed identification, companion planting, insect and butterfly identification,



composting, integrated pest management, fencing techniques and how to start plants from seed. Lessons

took place in the demonstration garden at our office building.

PSWCD partnered with Prince Edward VCE to provide this program.

Lindy Hamlett Scholarship Recipients



Gracie Coover
Nottoway Co.



Marlee Wallace
Nottoway Co.



Tyler Harris
Prince Edward Co.



- ◆ **Envirothon:** due to the virtual format, we were unable to secure area teams this year. We look forward to sponsoring teams in the 2022 competition.

Adult Education

- ◆ Provided in-person watershed training for the Master Naturalists
- ◆ Provided a watershed exhibit at Richlands Dairy “Family Farm Day”
- ◆ Presented at the Native Warm Season Grass Tour
- ◆ Posted native plant “cards” monthly on our FB page



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.



Storm events are becoming more intense and frequent, thus increasing the need for additional monitoring and follow-up inspections. Piedmont SWCD installed remote water level monitoring systems on four of the flood control dams. The remote monitoring systems allow District staff and Prince Edward County Emergency Services departments to check water levels during storm events. This helps emergency services staff make decisions to enact emergency preparedness plans. As funding becomes available, units will be installed on the remaining



Conducted 31 inspections

10 repair projects with approved engineer designs

3 dam repairs

Attended 2 dam owner workgroup seminars

dams. Nine of the dams located in the Buffalo Creek watershed are over their 50-year lifespan and are in need of small repairs such as rebuilding of wave berms, outfall pools and gate replacements. This year the District completed three of the repairs that included rebuilding a training dike (which helps control water flow in the event of the emergency spillway activation), outfall pool repair and installation of a riprap channel to control surface water runoff.

VALUED PARTNERSHIPS

STATE & FEDERAL

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

- USDA Farm Service Agency
- USDA NRCS-
Jeremy Evans, Robert Hazlegrove,
Telicia Berry, 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
- VA Dept. of Wildlife Resources
- Virginia Association of Soil and Water
Conservation Districts
- VA Forage & Grasslands Council
- VA Association of Environmental
Education

YOUTH & ADULT EDUCATION

- Amelia County High School
- Full Circle School
- Fuqua School
- Girl Scouts
- Kenston Forest School
- Longwood University
- Nottoway High School
- Prince Edward County Middle School
- Prince Edward County 4H
- Sunrise Learning Center

POSTER CONTEST

- Jean Martin, Joy Utzinger-Prince
Edward County Elementary School
- Marjie Krzyston-Amelia HS
- 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
Local Gov't-Administrative staff
- Farm Bureau Agencies
- Health Department staff
- Heart of VA Master Gardeners
- Central Piedmont Master Naturalists
- Middle James Roundtable
- Richlands Dairy Farm
- Southern Piedmont Agriculture
Research Extension Center

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!

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



BULK RATE
U.S. Postage Paid
Farmville, VA
23901
Permit No. 71

DIRECTORS

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

DISTRICT STAFF



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

GARY DILLARD
Amelia County
SARAH ECK
Nottoway County

DISTRICT STAFF

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

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