

The Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

The District Current

Volume 50, Issue 4 Winter 2020

Twenty Years of Service

The Henderson Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to say that two of its own, Supervisor Wayne Carland and District Director Jonathan Wallin, were both recognized at the Area 1 Fall Meeting for twenty years of service to the District. During their tenure, they have allocated over \$3 million to local farmers and homeowners for cost-share programs to improve water quality and conserve soil. Wayne Carland has served as Treasurer of the Board of Supervisors for many years and said he enjoys being a good steward of the county's natural resources; he especially enjoys the challenge of combating erosion. Supervisor Carland farms along a major water supply source and enjoys helping to solve the challenges presented. He noted, "I'm like Chairman Brannon, I like to start and complete several small projects. I think we've done a good job with that over the twenty years."

Jonathan Wallin began his Soil and Water career as a Soil Conservationist, but was quickly promoted to the role of District Director. As District Director, he helps put soil and water conservation practices on the ground. He leads the District's Agriculture Cost Share and Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Programs and manages the District's staff. "It has been a privilege to work with so many like-minded folks with an interest in conserving our natural resources in our county. I have enjoyed working with various landowners, farmers, organizations, and fellow agencies to protect what makes Henderson County a treasure," said Wallin.

The entire Soil and Water team, comprised of both Supervisors and staff, works well together. It is good to celebrate the significant accomplishment of these two gentlemen!

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The Henderson Soil & Water Conservation District provides equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, sexual preference, or disability. For special accommodations, please contact Civil Rights Coordinator Karen Ensley at (828) 697-4669 or hrd@hendersoncountync.gov



District Supervisors:

Andrew Brannon, Chairman
Dr. Greg Hoyt, Vice Chairman
Wayne Carland, Treasurer
Daniel McConnell, Secretary
Jerred Nix, Member

District Staff:

Jonathan Wallin, District Director
April Hoyt, Soil Conservationist/Edu. Coord.
Betsy Gerwig, Conservation Engineer
Caroline Wicker, Administrative Assistant
Emily Nelson, NRCS Soil Conservationist

Funding Awarded for Stream Restoration Projects

The Henderson County Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to announce that it has been awarded over \$300,000 in grant funding for two streambank restoration projects in the county.

One project will repair approximately 425 linear feet of Mill Pond Creek located on the Rugby Middle School campus. Extensive erosion to the streambank has occurred over the past two years due to large storms and several log jams. The restoration will stabilize the stream banks, install native vegetation, and provide a stream access point for educational purposes. The educational access point will provide a location for teachers to conduct hands-on lessons to enhance STEM learning opportunities. Students will be able to participate in citizen science through water quality monitoring of the stream. Water quality, aquatic habitat, and presence of native plant species will be improved with the completion of this project. The NC Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Water Resources and the Duke Energy Foundation have chosen to support this project with grant funding.

The second project will stabilize approximately 2,000 feet of streambank along Lewis Creek at the Edneyville Community Center. Similarly, this site has also received extensive damage due to large storms in recent years which have deposited large amounts of sediment into the stream and eroded parts of the walking trail. A floodplain and riparian buffer will be installed along with a new walking trail, educational signs, and an educational access point. A floodplain will slow storm flows to deposit sediment and debris on the floodplain rather than within the stream channel. The riparian buffer will stabilize the banks, increase native plant diversity, and provide aquatic and terrestrial animal habitats. A new walking trail will encourage physical fitness and the enjoyment of nature. Lastly, the educational access point will allow students to enter the stream and collect scientific data to quantify water quality, identify macroinvertebrates, and assess stream health. The site will also be used for educational events to teach the public about healthy stream systems, natural stream design, and native vegetation. With the completion of this project, schools in eastern Henderson County will have a nearby location for teachers to conduct hands-on lessons to enhance in-class learning. Funding was received from the NC Attorney General's office through their Environmental Enhancement grant and the US Environmental Protection Agency's 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Control grant.

The District is very appreciative of the funding received and is eager to begin the restoration process at these sites. The District is also excited about the educational opportunities each site will provide for the students, teachers, and residents of Henderson County.



Educational Contests: Seeking Applicants!

The Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District (HCSWCD) is again participating in the NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation's Educational Contests. Students may submit entries to the poster (3rd-6th grades), essay (6th grade), or public speaking contests (7th-8th grades). Entries must align with this year's theme, "We All Live in a Watershed," and contain related content. Posters will be judged on their conservation message, visual effectiveness, universal appeal, originality, and hand-drawn elements. Essays will be evaluated on content and writing skills and should be between 300 and 500 words. Lastly, contestants should prepare a four to six minute speech to be delivered virtually. All submissions are due January 14, 2021. Prizes are available! Please contact April Hoyt, HCSWCD Education Coordinator, for more information or visit our contest page at <https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/soilwater/page/educational-contests> .

Virtual Education Content Available

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting changes in the education system, the Henderson Soil and Water Conservation District has created virtual education content to augment student's schooling, whether at home or in the classroom. Lessons are aligned with the NC Essential Standards and are offered to teachers and students free of charge. The topics include, but are not limited to: wetlands, watersheds, and soils. Teachers may utilize the content on their own or request a live (virtual, of course!) presentation by HCSWCD Education Coordinator, April Hoyt. To schedule the use of these materials or a presentation by April, please contact the office at 828-697-4949 or visit our virtual content page at <https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/soilwater/webform/virtual-swcd-content> .

Thank you, Teachers!



Contributed Article: Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was started back in the 1930's in response to the damage caused by the "Dust Bowl." We were called the Soil Conservation Service back then. We've come a long way in the last 90 years and have made great strides in technology and farming practices. One thing remains the same: the need to protect our natural resources. When you make a decision about what to plant, how to plant it, where to plant it, etc., those decisions don't just affect you today. They affect everyone for generations. It is like a ripple on the pond; one good decision can have lasting effects and will touch everyone around you in some form or fashion. The same holds true for a poor decision. That's why it is imperative that we do everything we can to farm in a sustainable manner, protect our water quality, and enhance the soil biology of our planted fields. The first place to start is by having an updated conservation plan for your farming operation. Do you have an updated conservation plan on your farm? If not, call your local NRCS Soil Conservationist, Emily Nelson, to schedule an appointment to get started. Emily can be reached at (828) 693-1629, extension 3.

As 2020 comes to a close, we hope you are safe, well, and have a Happy New Year!



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation Service



Helping People Help the Land

Sometimes defining what a federal agency does for the public can be confusing, and rarely does one word sum it all up. So, when someone asks us, "What can the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) do for me?" we want to provide a clear and concise message so that you know exactly what services we offer you.

What can the NRCS do for you? We help you help the land, which is our mission, "Helping People Help the Land". How do we do that exactly? We help you help the land by providing you technical and financial assistance to protect natural resources on your land.

Our services start with technical assistance in the form of conservation planning. Conservation planning is a voluntary process that helps you develop a customized record of your natural resources and how they are utilized on your farming operation, or on your forested lands and wildlife habitats. It interprets the capabilities and limitations of your land for meeting your objectives.

This customized record, called a Conservation Plan, outlines selected conservation practices that will improve the use of resources on your land. Conservation practices are used to overcome natural resource limitations and issues, and improve sustainability. The plan provides a reasonable schedule for you to implement these practices according to your timetable.

With a Conservation Plan in hand and your conservation practices mapped out, NRCS will help you identify Farm Bill conservation programs that offer financial assistance to help you implement the practices identified within your Conservation Plan.

NRCS has a presence in every county in North Carolina, and we work in partnership with local, state, and national entities to help landowners become good land stewards.

To find out more about NRCS in North Carolina, please visit our website at www.nc.nrcs.usda.gov or contact your local field office today.

Ten ways a Conservation Plan can benefit you.

1. Saves money as your land becomes more productive.
2. Protects the natural resources that support your business.
3. Increases your property value.
4. Enhances open space and wildlife habitat.
5. Conserves soil and water for a sustainable future.
6. Prevents off-site impacts, and may help you comply with environmental regulations.
7. Saves you time, money, and labor.
8. Makes your land more attractive and promotes good neighbor relations.
9. Promotes health and safety for your family.
10. Helps you identify your eligibility for some USDA programs.

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USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

5 Steps to Assistance

How to Get Assistance from NRCS for Farms, Ranches and Forests

- 1 PLANNING**
Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.
- 2 APPLICATION**
With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.
- 3 ELIGIBILITY**
Find out if you're eligible for NRCS' variety of financial assistance programs.
- 4 RANKING**
NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.
- 5 IMPLEMENTING**
Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

Get Started with NRCS

Do you farm or ranch and want to make improvements to the land that you own or lease?

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

1 Planning To get started with NRCS, we recommend you stop by your local NRCS field office.

We'll discuss your vision for your land.

NRCS provides landowners with free technical assistance, or advice, for their land. Common technical assistance includes: resource assessment, practice design and resource monitoring. Your conservation planner will help you determine if financial assistance is right for you.

2 Application We'll walk you through the application process. To get started on applying for financial assistance, we'll work with you:

- To fill out an AD 1026, which ensures a conservation plan is in place before lands with highly erodible soils are farmed. It also ensures that identified wetland areas are protected.
- To meet other eligibility certifications.

Once complete, we'll work with you on the application, or CPA 1200.

Applications for most programs are accepted on a continuous basis, but they're considered for funding in different ranking periods. Be sure to ask your local NRCS district conservationist about the deadline for the ranking period to ensure you turn in your application in time.

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3 Eligibility As part of the application process, we'll check to see if you are eligible.

To do this, you'll need to bring:

- An official tax ID (Social Security number or an employer ID)
- A property deed or lease agreement to show you have control of the property; and
- A farm tract number.

If you don't have a farm tract number, you can get one from USDA's Farm Service Agency. Typically, the local FSA office is located in the same building as the local NRCS office. You only need a farm tract number if you're interested in financial assistance.

4 Ranking NRCS will take a look at the applications and rank them according to local resource concerns, the amount of conservation benefits the work will provide and the needs of applicants.

5 Implementing If you're selected, you can choose whether to sign the contract for the work to be done.

Once you sign the contract, you'll be provided standards and specifications for completing the practice or practices, and then you will have a specified amount of time to implement. Once the work is implemented and inspected, you'll be paid the rate of compensation for the work if it meets NRCS standards and specifications.

To find out more, go to: www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted

NRCS announces February 08,2021, as the deadline for funding Opportunity for Conservation Easements

Raleigh, NC, Dec 11, 2020 — The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in North Carolina reminds landowners that in order to be considered for the fiscal year 2021 funding for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), applications must be submitted by February 08, 2021. The ACEP, created through the 2014 Farm Bill and reauthorized in the 2018 Farm Bill, is a program that has two components, known as Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE). ACEP-WRE applications are accepted directly from producers on eligible lands. These easements will restore and enhance wetlands and improve habitat. Eligible lands include farmed, prior converted or forested wetlands that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. Applications will be rated according to the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds, fish and other wildlife.

Applications for the ACEP-ALE are accepted from eligible partners. These eligible entities may submit proposals to NRCS to acquire a conservation easement on eligible agricultural land. NRCS does not accept applications for ACEP-ALE directly from producers. Producers will need to work with an eligible entity to pursue funding for an ACEP-ALE conservation easement. Some examples of eligible entities include county Board of Commissioners, Land Trusts and Land Conservancies.

Applications for ACEP are encouraged to be submitted year-round. However, NRCS will establish specific dates when applications will be considered for potential financial assistance. All applications must be submitted to North Carolina NRCS by February 08, 2021, for both ACEP-ALE and ACEP-WRE for current available funding considerations. Program applications are available through your local USDA Service Center. To learn more about financial and technical assistance available to help North Carolina farmers and other landowners improve and protect their land, visit NRCS in North Carolina's website at www.nc.nrcs.usda.gov, or visit your local NRCS office. USDA service center locations are listed at <http://offices.usda.gov>.



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Conservation Service**



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Our mission:

To provide educational, technical and financial assistance to conserve soil, improve water quality and enhance the natural resources of Henderson County.

