Halifax SWCD Newsletter

Spring 2018

Rain Barrel Workshop

The Halifax Soil & Water Conservation District and the Virginia Cooperative Extension-Southside Master Gardeners Association will be hosting a Rain Barrel Workshop on April 21st at 9 a.m. Classroom session will be held in the Halifax Extension Office Auditorium at 171 South Main Street in the Town of Halifax.

If collected in a rain barrel, one inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof can yield more than 620 gallons of usable water. Without rain barrels or similar systems in place, roof runoff can collect pollutants as it flows and drains into local waterways or municipal storm water systems. Additionally, catching and saving rain water can reduce the need to use treated, potable water to water gardens, lawns, and landscaping. During the workshops, individuals will learn about the benefits of rain barrels, how to construct and install rain barrels, and will construct their own rain barrel out of a heavy food-grade barrel and hardware kit from Clean Virginia Waterways.

Workshop cost is $40 and includes a quality food-grade barrel, required materials and hardware, instructions, and assistance needed to construct your rain barrel. Bring gloves and channel locks to the class. Please come join us for this workshop as part of Halifax's Annual Earth Day Extravaganza.

Visit http://halifaxswcd.org/rain-barrel-workshops to register or stop by the HSWCD office located at 171 S. Main Street in the Town of Halifax and fill out the application and pay by cash or check. After class join in all the Earth Day fun with music, kids activities, informational displays, food and of course the regular Farmers Market offerings like fresh produce, homemade breads, eggs, organic meat, honey plus all the indoor vendors with homemade herbal lotions and soaps, arts, crafts and collectibles.

Cool-Season Annual Forage Pasture Walk

April 24, 2018 2-4pm

Topics to be Covered:

- Selection of cool-season annual forages
- Including annuals in grazing system
- Nutritive value of annual forages
- Making the most with minimal fencing

Speakers include:

Ronnie Waller—Waller Brothers Farm
Dr. Gabe Pent—Virginia Tech
Rick Brown—Halifax SWCD

Event will be held at Waller Brothers Farm, 3098 Golden Leaf Rd, Nathalie, VA

Rain or Shine

Registration not required but if you plan to come call 434-476-7923

VCE Programs & Opportunities

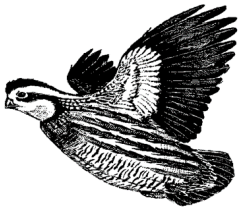
Contact: Rebekah Slabach

Halifax County Extension Agent

Agriculture & Natural Resources

- Household Water Quality Program – Collection Date: May 30th; Registration required by May 23rd
- Southside Sustainable Ag Mini Bus Tour – June 12th; Locations/ Program to come
- Pasture Walk – June 14th; Ringgold
- Weed Management Field Day – June 19th @ SPAREC
- Blueberry Festival – June 23rd @ Bright Meadows Farm
- SoBo Farmers Market Grand Opening – June 16th
- Halifax Farmers Market Grand Opening – June 30th
- Hemp Field Day – July 26th

Wildlife Food Plot Contest



Open to Boys and Girls

AGES 8 to 18

A prepared seed mix donated by Non-Typical Outdoors will be provided at Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District, free of charge. **Food plots should be planted by June 1, 2017.** Judging will be done in late August/early September. All forms must be returned to the Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District by June 15, 2018.

Entry forms and seed can be picked up at the Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District office located in the USDA Service Center 171 S. Main Street, Halifax, VA (beside the Halifax Library) 434-476-7923

2018 Youth Conservation Camp at Virginia Tech

For 41 years, the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts has sponsored a week long summer conservation camp for Virginia high school students (*currently enrolled in grades 9-12)* on the campus of Virginia Tech. The program brings together about 70 interested students for a week of learning about Virginia's natural resources from conservation professionals and faculty from Virginia Tech.

This camp is an outstanding opportunity for students to gain hands-on training and experience in the fields of conservation and natural resources. Only a limited number of campers are accepted each year and scholarships to cover registration fees will be available from the Halifax SWCD for the Halifax County students selected to attend the camp. Application forms are available @ www.halifaxswcd.org or by visiting the Halifax SWCD office. **Applications MUST be submitted to the Halifax SWCD office by April 27, 2018.**

Farm to School Program

Photo by Michael D. Tedesco/Farm Flavor Media

Halifax SWCD has been involved with the Farm to School Program led by Agricultural Director Kimley Blanks. classroom lessons on the different varieties of sweet potatoes, the seasonality of different food crops, the nutritional value of sweet potatoes, how sweet potatoes are transported from farms to the student's homes, and the importance of supporting local agricultural producers. On the day following each classroom lesson, Halifax SWCD personnel visited each elementary school and talked to the students about planting, growing, and harvesting sweet potatoes prior to assisting with a taste test of different sweet potato recipes that had been prepared by Sodexo and Halifax County School employees. This year's program reached approximately 400 fifth grade students and involved all seven elementary schools within Halifax County.

This school year Meadville Elementary participated in having a school garden. The fifth grade students were able to help plant the garden, help tend to it, assist in the harvest, and taste the broccoli they had grown. Students were also sent home with kale and turnip greens with a few recipes. Kimley Blanks is currently talking with Cluster Springs Elementary about adding a garden. Halifax SWCD assists with preparing the soil, planting and care of the gardens.

The Farm to School program is a collaborative effort of the local Soil and Water Conservation District, local Natural Resource Conservation Service, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Halifax County Agricultural Development and the Halifax County School System. The county's grassroots program recently joined the Farm to School Network, which intends to duplicate more successes like Halifax County across Virginia.

Halifax Farm to School program was highlighted in the 2018 edition of the Virginia Agriculture Magazine.

Photo Contest

Conservation through the seasons." Capture those vibrant moments and express what conservation looks like to you throughout the seasons! The contest is from Feb. 1st- Aug. 15th, 2018 and people can submit up to 10 photos. For more information please check out the VASWCD website http://vaswcd.org/photocontest

Halifax SWCD Online!

Please visit us online at:

WWW.HALIFAXSWCD.ORG

We work with the people who work the land.

2018 Halifax SWCD Youth Conservation Camp

The Halifax Soil & Water Conservation District hosted our 47th Annual Youth Conservation Camp at Edmunds park on Thursday, March 29, 2018. This year's camp was attended by 130 sixth-graders from Halifax County Middle School and Halifax Christian School that spent the day learning about conservation and natural resources. Instructors and volunteers from the Halifax County Beekeepers Association, Shealy's Southside Serpents, Southside Master Gardener Association, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Southside Soil and Water Conservation District, and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service provided the students with hands-on learning opportunities. Classes were presented covering forestry, herpetology, plant identification, pollination, soils, watersheds, stream monitoring, and wildlife. The students enjoyed a full day of classes along with a delicious cookout lunch prepared at the park.

The Halifax Soil & Water Conservation District is grateful for the volunteers and conservation colleagues who dedicate their time to environmental education and make this camp possible. Help from the Halifax County FFA students was greatly appreciated. Additionally, we'd like to thank the area businesses and organizations that made financial contributions to help offset the cost of the camp. This year's donors included: Farm Credit of the Virginias, Huber Engineered Woods, Owen Fencing LLC, Halifax County Farm Bureau, Climate Control Inc., Sentara Halifax Regional Hospital Community Partnership, and H&M Logging Inc.

Spring Venture Outdoors - Tree I.D. Series (*NEW*)

Attention Landowners! Are you a new or existing forest landowner wishing to know more about your trees from tree identification to improvement techniques within your forest? Each spring Virginia Cooperative Extension offers one-day short courses on management options for forestland in Southside Virginia and this year for the first time we will focus on ***Tree Identification – Where it All Begins!*** *This will be a precursor to forest health to include an update on invasive plants and insects and a short field trip after lunch.*

Class size is limited to the first 25 registrants so register early!

When and Where? *Two sessions (**attend one**):*

- **May 18 (Halifax County, Wedgwood Golf Center facility – 2131 Mountain Rd. Halifax, VA 24558)**
- **May 24 (Lynchburg, CVCC Campus, Merritt Hall Bldg. Room 5145).**

Sessions run 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. and are $20 per person, $30 per couple. Deadlines are 5 weekdays prior to each session. Lunch is provided and refunds only apply with an emergency.

For additional program information details and online registration, visit www.forestupdate.frec.vt.edu and see "Events" or "Online Registration". Contact Jason Fisher, Extension Agent ANR, Forestry and Natural Resources at (434) 476-2147 x3389 or jasonf@vt.edu for questions. See you there!

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

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Halifax Soil & Water Conservation District
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Board of Directors:
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Blair Hall—Associate
Hudson Reese—Associate
Rebekah Slabach—Associate

Staff:
Rick Brown—Conservation Specialist
Luke Hudson—Conservation Specialist
Melissa Waller—Education & Outreach Specialist

Upcoming Events:

April 12 – Halifax SWCD Board Meeting
April 21 – 9th Annual Town of Halifax Earth Day Extravaganza
April 21 – Rain Barrel Workshop
April 24 - Cool-Season Annual Forage Pasture Walk
May 4 – Halifax County Junior Livestock Show
June 10 - James River Farm Field Day
June 11 - Pond Workshop

Halifax SWCD welcomes our new Conservation Specialist, Luke Hudson. Luke Attended Virginia Tech and received a degree in Agricultural Economics, focusing in Agribusiness Management. Growing up on a tobacco farm in Virgilina, Luke learned the level of determination and commitment that it takes to be successful in the agricultural field. After graduating Luke continued to work on his family farm and took on a larger role in production. Luke interned at the Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center prior to graduating. While interning Luke learned how important research and conservation are to helping producers adapt to changing markets, conditions, and improving soil health. Luke's interests include hunting, fishing, canoeing, and spending time with friends and family. "I'm glad to be a part of Halifax SWCD. I look forward to meeting new people and producers. I am excited to learn all I can about the programs we offer and how I can help the people of Halifax County."

Halifax SWCD
P.O. Box 247
Halifax, VA 24558

PLACE STAMP HERE