Halifax SWCD Newsletter

Summer 2018

HALIFAX SWCD SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

We work with the people who work the land.

18th ANNUAL WATERSHED ADVENTURE CAMP

The Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District sent three local students to attend the 18th Annual Watershed Adventure Camp at Staunton River Battlefield State Park, held June 18-22, 2018. A total of twelve students from Halifax, Lake Country, and Southside Soil and Water Conservation Districts attended this five-day program to learn about a variety of natural resources and environmental conservation topics. Valuable assistance came from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the staff at Staunton River Battlefield State Park, Dominion Energy, Halifax County Parks and Recreation, Jim and Ginger Zeigler and the Halifax Beekeepers Association, Mike Roberts and Ward Burton and the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, SWCD employees, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Camp participants were chosen based upon the submission of applications stating their interest and experience in environmental issues. The curriculum of this fun and educational week included: watershed and map study, soils, forestry, tree and plant identification, pollination, wildlife, stream quality surveying, biological and chemical water monitoring, wildlife and tour of WRP wetlands site, local history with a tour of Mulberry Plantation, a tour of the Dominion Energy-Clover Power Plant, and several natural resources themed arts and crafts projects. Students were also able to attend the grand re-opening of the park and met Clyde Cristman, Director of Virginia Department of Recreation and Conservation.

The Watershed Adventure Camp was administered cost-free to the students; lunches, snacks, drinks, travel and incidental expenses were made possible through monetary donations from Benchmark Community Bank-Kenbridge, Fry, Jordan & Wilson Insurance, BKS Seeding, Inc, Charlotte County Farm Bureau, Meckenburg Farm Bureau, Mecklenburg Electric Coop., B&B Consultants, Colonial Agricultural Education Foundation Inc., Drs. Campbell and Rutherford, DDS, Spaulding Equipment Company Inc., and Wagstaff Angus.

The students from Halifax County that attended the Camp were; Savannah Terrell, Aleigha Link, and Kaylie Lewis. Each year the Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District chooses up to ten fourth/fifth grade students to attend the Watershed Adventure Camp. If you are interested in attending the Watershed Adventure Camp in the future, please contact Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District at 434-476-7923 or visit www.halifaxswcd.org for more information.

PREPARING FOR GENERATION NEXT

Learn how to keep your land Intact, In Forest, and In the Family

You value your forest and/or farmland for many reasons. Are you prepared to pass the environmental and heirloom rooted in your forest to the next generation? These programs will provide tools and resources for discussing this difficult topic with your family. These hands –on workshops include free legal advice from professionals experienced in intergenerational land transfer and landowner testimonials of estate planning steps and strategies they have used Family attendance is welcome and encouraged.

Application process is open on-line at: **www.ext.vt.edu/generationnext-va**

Mini Workshops

July 24, Brunswick County
August 2, Halifax County
August 21, Surry County

2 Day Workshops

July 19-20, SW Virginia Higher Education Center, Abingdon
July 27-28, Lynchburg Liberty University's Mountain Conference Center
Locations and dates are subject to change

For more information contact Jason Fisher at 434-476-2147 x3389 or jasonf@vt.edu

Virginia Agriculture Cost-share Program Sign-up Open

On July 1, 2018, Halifax SWCD began their sign-up for the 2018-2019 Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program. This program provides cost-share for producers to implement conservation practices on their property to protect water quality. Since 2001, Halifax SWCD has provided this program to producers in Halifax Co. The program includes practices such as: stream exclusion, cover crops, permanent vegetative cover on cropland, afforestation of openland, grassed waterways, and critical area plantings. Anyone interested in the program should contact the Halifax SWCD office to find out more information and to set up a time to go over different options.

Please visit us online at:

WWW.HALIFAXSWCD.ORG

Carrs Work for Bobwhite and Pollinators

Halifax, VA June 8, 2018
Submitted by; Raymond Cocke

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assists Halifax County landowners with their efforts to improve their cropland, livestock grazing, forestry and wildlife resources. Willie and Vickie Carr are participants in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and are working to improve habitat for Northern Bobwhite Quail on their farm.

The Northern Bobwhite Quail is an "edge" species and seeks habitat that consists Of native grasslands, shrub thickets and mixed pine and hardwoods. The quail are especially dependent on native grasses for nesting and wildflower seeds and insects that provide food and cover. To help reverse bobwhite declines, NRCS is working with private landowners to manage their habitat.

The Carr's farm was predominantly planted loblolly pine and open fields of Kentucky 31 fescue. The Carr's sought assistance through the EQIP to convert endophyte-infected tall fescue and other introduced species to native grasses and wildflowers for to benefit both bobwhite quail and pollinator species. The first step was to suppress the Kentucky 31 fescue and then plant the native grass and wild flower seed mixture. "NRCS recommended that Willie use a no-till drill offered for rent by the Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District to plant the seed to reduce potential erosion on the fields" stated Raymond Cocke, NRCS District Conservationist.

Now that the native grasses and pollinators have germinated, Willie manages the vegetation with clipping, spot herbicides and rotational disking. "It seems to be working. I was on their farm last week to check on the wild flower stand and numerous quail calls were heard", stated Cocke.

Available Bobwhite Programs:

Northern Bobwhite in Working Grasslands Program

This new Working Lands for Wildlife program is designed to help bring back the quail that were once an integral part of Virginia's farming way of life. Eligible producers can get technical and financial assistance to implement various conservation practices

Northern Bobwhite in Pine Savannah

NRCS offers technical assistance and incentive payments for planning and installing practices with the potential to drastically increase the amout of pine savannah habitats in Virginia.

Some Available Practices with these programs:

- Brush Management
- Early Successional Habitat
- Firebreak
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Hedgerow Planting
- Herbaceous Weed Control
- Prescribed Burning
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Forage and Biomass Planting
- Prescribed Grazing
- Fence
- Conservation Cover
- Firebreak
- Livestock Pipeline
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Early Successional Habitat Development

How to Apply:

Signups start October 2018. Interested landowners should contact the Halifax NRCS service center for more information on working grasslands restoration program through the EQIP program. NRCS staff will work with the applicant to develop a conservation plan that will become the basis of an EQIP contract.

FARMERS MARKET & INDOOR MARKET PLACE
BEST KEPT SECRET IN HALIFAX, VA

209 South Main Street, Halifax, VA Open every Saturday January-March , 9am-1pm April-December, 8am-1pm Special event/holiday hours to be announced 434-476-2343 or 434-222-6604 townoffice@townofhalifax.com www.townofhalifax.com Like us on FB @townofhalifaxfarmersmarket

EVENTS

6/30 Grand Opening Celebration/ Market Tour
8/11Farmers Mkt week celebration/Market tour
10/13 Fall 5K Fun Run/Walk—October 13th
10/20 Fall Festival
10/31 Trick or Treat
11/24 Small Business/Shop Small Saturday
11/25 Market Open House

Seasonal produce along with pasture raised meats, fresh eggs, jams/jellies, fruits, baked goods, flowers, herbs, and

Summer Pasture Walk

All farmers and landowners are invited to attend and learn how Dick and Mary Lund have successfully developed a forage based beef production system to provide grass fed and finished Black Angus beef to their clients in the region. Specific topics include:

- **Overview of the forage and livestock production system**

– using conservation in the grazing system development – balancing farm work with quality of life

- **How soil fertility and recordkeeping made a substantial difference**
- **Managing for shade in a rotational grazing system**
- **Practical tools that make managed grazing easy**
- **Using alternative forages to meet seasonal livestock needs**

– summer and winter annual forages – transitioning to novel endophyte fescue

- **Forage identification and weed management**
- **Conservation program update from USDA-NRCS and the local SWCD**

Featured Speakers: Dr. John Fike, Va Tech Forage Extension Specialist Dr. Gabe Pent, Va Tech Ruminant Livestock System Specialist JB Daniel, USDA-NRCS Grassland Agronomist

July 19, 2018 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm Lund Angus Farm Dick and Mary Lund's Farm 1107 Narrow Passage Road, Spout Spring, VA 24593

2018 Annual Tobacco Research and Extension Field Day

Virginia Tech Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research & Extension Center 2375 Darvills Road, Blackstone, VA July 26, 2018 Registration begins at 5:00 p.m. Dinner: 5:30 p.m. Field research tour to begin at 6:00 p.m. Field Tour Topics Include:

- Flue, burley, and dark-fired tobacco variety evaluations
- Black shank fungicide and resistance trials
- Tobacco nematode control
- Tobacco leaf spot fungicide evaluation
- Agronomic management studies including comparison of harvest management practices, de-lugging treatments, transplant starter fertilizers and growth promoters, foliar fertilizers, and sidedress fertilizer sources
- Drip irrigation and tobacco fertigation
- Use of UAS or an Ag drone in tobacco research and production
- Tobacco sucker control and MH residue management
- Organic tobacco fertilization
- Insect pest management
- Tobacco curing efficiency research

Please RSVP by emailing makenny@vt.edu or call 434-292-5331 Margaret Kenny

The annual Conservation Poster Contest provides kindergarten through twelfth grade students an opportunity to convey their thoughts about soil, water and related natural resource issues through art. It also highlights the educational outreach efforts of conservation districts and their state conservation associations, auxiliaries and agencies. The poster contest theme follows the annual NACD Stewardship theme.

Each year, the poster contest starts at the district level. Any Halifax County teacher interested in having their students participate contact Melissa Waller, our Education and Outreach Specialist at (434)548-1697. Local SWCDs need to submit these poster winners to the VASWCD for consideration by **October 19, 2018**.

Watersheds Our Water, Our Home is the theme for this year. Melissa can come to your class to teach the students about watersheds and instruct the students on the poster rules and guidelines.

Ag Breakfast Series

The Agriculture Agencies of Halifax County are planning the third annual Ag Breakfast Series for producers. We would love to hear your input on what topics you would like to have covered.

The Ag Breakfast Series seeks to bring in experts while addressing producer needs and issues facing their operation. Each month, the 1-2-hour morning event over a free breakfast focuses on topics for producers as well as an outlook looking into the new year and season. The series will be as years previous, held on the second Tuesday of the months of November to March.

The programs will begin with breakfast at 9 AM and will be held at the Ag Marketing Center in Scottsburg. There is no cost to attend, but registration is required by the Friday before each breakfast meeting. Please contact the Halifax SWCD office at 434-476-7923 to register.

The Ag Breakfast Series is a partnership between VCE, SWCD, NRCS, and Agriculture Development.

Please call Halifax SWCD with any suggestions you have for topics. (434)476-7923

HALIFAX SWCD SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Halifax Soil & Water Conservation District
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Board of Directors:
Page Wilkerson—Chairman
Larry Layman—Vice Chairman
Bruce Pearce
Bobby Hall
Jason Fisher—VCE Appointment
Blair Hall—Associate
Hudson Reese—Associate
Rebekah Slabach—Associate

Staff:
Justin Smith—Conservation Specialist
Luke Hudson—Conservation Specialist
Melissa Waller—Education Specialist

Upcoming Events:

July 8-14—Youth Conservation Camp
July 16 – Halifax SWCD Board Meeting
July 19—VFGC Summer Pasture Walk
July 26—2018 Tobacco Research and Extension Field Day
August 9 – Halifax SWCD Board Meeting
September 13 – Halifax SWCD Board Meeting
October 11 – Halifax SWCD Board Meeting

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

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