

HAYWOOD COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Annual Report 2019-2020



Mission Statement

**Protect the natural
resources of Haywood County through education,
conservation and preservation.**

Haywood Soil and Water Conservation District

589 Raccoon Road, Suite 203 Waynesville, NC 28786
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Monthly Board Meeting: Second Tuesday of each month, 9:00 a.m.
Downstairs Conference Room

Board of Supervisors

Bill Yarborough Chairman

bill.yarborough@ncagr.gov

Charles Boyd Vice Chairman

Charles@WNCLandscaping.com

James Ferguson Treasurer

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Robert Cathey Secretary

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Will Morrow Member

morrowfarms464@gmail.com

District Staff

Duane Vanhook, District Director and NC Ag Cost Share Technician

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Ryan Manning, Farmland Conservation Technician

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Sheila Mills-Mode, Administrative Assistant II

sheila.mode@haywoodcountync.gov

Dana Miller, Education Coordinator

dana.miller@haywoodcountync.gov

NCD&CS

Tim Garrett, ATAC

Timothy.Garrett@usda.gov

Natural Resource Conservation Services

John Ottinger, Supervisory Soil Conservationist

John.Ottinger@usda.gov

NEW STAFF

Welcome Sheila Mills-Mode!



Sheila joined the District in December 2019 as the Administrative Assistant II. Sheila is a native of Haywood County. She enjoys showing her dairy cows at local and State Fairs. She graduated with an Associate's Degree in Business Administration from Haywood Community College in 2019, and is currently enrolled in classes at Western Carolina University to further her education. Sheila serves as the Administrative/Finance Officer for the District overseeing all finance and administrative duties.

Welcome Dana Miller!



Dana joined the District in July 2019 as the Education Coordinator. She is a native of Gaston County who is passionate about environmental education. After graduating Western Carolina University with a B.S.Ed. in Science Education, she received her M.Ed. from Vanderbilt University. Dana taught middle and high school science in public schools for six years before coming to the District. In her free time, Dana enjoys spending time outdoors, being with loved ones, reading, cooking and live music.

FRIENDS AND PARTNERS

The District works closely with a number of other natural resource agencies, non-profits and professionals. It belongs to a partnership that includes:

- ◇ The NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- ◇ The Division of Soil and Water Conservation (NCDA&CS)
- ◇ The North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Commission
- ◇ The North Carolina Conservation District Employees Association
- ◇ The North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation
- ◇ USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- ◇ The Area I Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- ◇ The Southeast District Employees Association
- ◇ The National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- ◇ Southwestern NC Resource Conservation & Development
- ◇ Mountain Research Station
- ◇ Haywood County Extension
- ◇ USDA Farm Services Agency
- ◇ Haywood Waterways Association

Conservation Programs Assisting Landowners

Healthy, productive soil and clean water don't just happen; in fact, both of these important natural resources face a variety of challenges these days, from severe weather events to problems caused by our modern lifestyle. Valuable technical guidance and financial assistance were provided to landowners through both state and federal programs available at the District totaling **\$1,109,442** during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

STATE FUNDING

North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program	\$55,142
Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program	\$7,500
Impaired/Impacted Streams	\$8,719
Total	\$71,361

State funding was applied to 4 contracts, protecting 99 acres of farmland.

GRANTS

Clean Water Management Trust Fund - Jonathans Creek Agricultural Water Quality Project	\$500,000
NC Soil and Water Foundation - Pasture Management Workshop	\$1,000

FEDERAL FUNDING

Haywood had 8 new EQIP contracts totaling **\$497,298.00**
 Haywood had 2 new Conservation Stewardship contracts totaling **\$39,783.00**
 Conservation plans were written on 383 new acres.
 Conservation applied to 586 acres of **pastureland**. (144 acres Prescribed Grazing)
 Conservation applied on 224 acres of land that is actively managing **wildlife**.
 Conservation applied on 117 acres of **forest land**.
 Conservation applied on 35 acres of **crop land**.
 Practices applied to Improve and protect water quality: 385 acres
 28 Active Contracts on 928 Acres

Total acres with conservation applied: **258 acres**
 Total NRCS program funding applied: **\$537,081 on 10 separate contracts on 320.9 acres**

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

In North Carolina, agriculture and related businesses contribute \$78 billion to the state's economy per year. Meeting present and future needs of the agricultural community in Haywood County is an important part of the District's job, with farmland protection provided in four ways:

1. Voluntary Ag Districts (VAD): A 10 year *voluntary* agreement
2. Enhanced Voluntary Ag Districts (EVAD): Voluntary, but with a 10 year *written recorded* agreement
3. Term Easements: Minimum of 15 years
4. Permanent Easements: Easement stays with the land no matter the owner.

The landowner is not the only one who benefits from VADs — we all do.

VADs help conserve the things we all love about Haywood County, the heritage of each individual community, the scenic beauty of the area, clean air and clean water. When it comes to the local economy, VADs can mean more local jobs, farm products, tax income and tourism while minimizing the infrastructure burden on the local government.

The District won the Haywood Waterways Association 2019 Pigeon River Award.



COUNTY FARMLAND PROGRAMS

Voluntary Ag Districts (VAD) acres: **12,609.9**

Enhanced Voluntary Ag District (EVAD) acres: **2,398**

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Term Easements: **764.9 acres**

Dollar value: **\$2,301,000**

Permanent Conservation Easements: **1,116.8 acres**

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Program	Number
Fifth Grade Conservation Field Day — Our 38th year!	504 students
Area 1 Envirothon Competition	4 teams
Contests: Poster, Essay, Slide Show, Speech & Computer Designed Poster	33 participants
Conservation Teacher of the Year	1
Area 1 FFA Land Judging Competition	10 teams
Pink Francis Memorial Scholarship — Haywood Community College	1 student
Kids in the Creek– Watershed program	500 participants
Classroom Programs– virtual and in-person	2,073 students



CONSERVATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Amy Harrington

The 2020 Conservation Teacher of the Year is Amy Harrington, 8th grade science teacher at Bethel Middle School. Harrington began her career as a conservation and environmental educator at a National Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi. She explains that “much of my 8th grade curriculum naturally lends itself to teaching about conservation and natural resources. 8th graders in North Carolina learn about ecosystem interactions, monitoring the hydrosphere, energy resources, geology, and the cycling of matter on Earth, just to name a few”. Harrington says that she “finds that teenagers are naturally engaged and inquisitive when they are outside exploring”. She engages her students in environmental experiences including weekly bird observations, monitoring squirrel sightings, and studying phenology by making close observations of trees weekly for an entire year. Her classes have been selected by the NC Arboretum to participate in a variety of their Project Explore citizen science projects for the past few years. Her classes have also participated in eMammal/Candid Critters - a camera trapping program to help scientists monitor local wildlife. Outside of the classroom, Harrington sponsors Bethel Middle’s Envirothon team, which qualified for the state competition last year, and the Robotics team. All the hard work is worth it to Harrington, she believes that “it is vital for this generation to learn about their impacts on Earth and what they can do to have a positive influence on a daily basis!”

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HIGHLIGHTS in EDUCATION

CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

The District's Education Coordinator delivered over **50** educational programs to **2,073 students and adults** throughout the county during the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Classroom programs focus on a variety of science topics including food webs, water quality, soil science, weather, rocks, recycling and many more. **53** classroom programs are currently offered to K-12 students by the District, with additional custom programs available. All programs are aligned to state standards and are designed to engage students in hands-on, experiential learning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many programs were transitioned into virtual experiences and delivered through various meeting platforms. All the instructional materials needed for these programs are provided free of charge by the District.



CONSERVATION CONTESTS

Each year, the District administers several conservation contests for students in grades 3 through 9. The contests include a poster contest, essay contest, slideshow contest and speech contest. Winners of the District contests advance to the Area 1 (16 western-most counties) contest. This year, two Haywood County participants advanced to the Area 1 competition, with one participant making it all the way to the state competition. All the District winners were honored at the Awards Night Ceremony in February 2020.