

HAYWOOD SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Annual Report



**Mission Statement: Protect the natural
resources of Haywood County through education,
financial and technical assistance**

Haywood Soil and Water Conservation District

589 Raccoon Road, Suite 203 Waynesville, NC 28786

828.452.2741, Extension 3

Monthly Board Meeting: Second Tuesday of each month, 9:00 a.m.

Downstairs Conference Room

Board of Supervisors

Carlyle Ferguson *Chairman*

fergusoncarlyle@bellsouth.net

Bill Yarborough *Vice Chairman*

bill.yarborough@ncagr.gov

James Ferguson *Treasurer*

jamesmferg@yahoo.com

Robert Cathey *Secretary*

smokadoe@bellsouth.net

Charles Boyd, *Member*

Charles@WNCLandscaping.com

District Staff

Duane Vanhook *District Director*

NC Ag Cost Share Technician

duane.vanhook@nc.nacdnet.net

Ryan Manning *Farmland Conservation Technician*

ryan.manning@nc.nacdnet.net

Gail Heathman *Education Coordinator*

gail.heathman@haywoodcountync.gov

NCDA&CS

Tim Garrett *ATAC*

Timothy.Garrett@nc.usda.gov

Natural Resources Conservation Service

John Ottinger *Supervisory Soil Conservationist*

John.Ottinger@nc.usda.gov

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 **\$548,025** during the 2017-18 fiscal year.



State programs are administered by Duane Vanhook.

STATE FUNDING	
	\$ 206,827
North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program	\$ 50,188
Disaster Recovery Program — Pasture Renovation	\$108,000
Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program	\$ 7,500
Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP)	\$ 30,000
Impaired/Impacted Streams	\$ 11,139
PROGRAM YEAR HIGHLIGHTS	
Draught damaged pasture renovated	314 acres
Stream protected	4,850 l. feet
Alternative watering systems installed	3



The federal programs are administered by John Ottinger, Supervisory Soil Conservationist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

As the part-time Conservation Planning Specialist, Tim Garrett lends his considerable experience from many years with NRCS to writing conservation plans, EQIP planning and contracting, stream restoration programs, and farmland conservation easement monitoring. He provides valuable assistance to both the District and the NRCS field programs in multiple counties. Tim is employed by the NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation through the Accelerated Technical Assistance for Conservation (ATAC) agreement.

FEDERAL FUNDING

\$ 341,198

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
& Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

934 Contracted Acres
17 Active Contracts

Conservation Best Management Practices included:

Streambank Restoration, Wildlife Habitat Restoration, Stream Exclusion, Forest Management Practices, Livestock Watering Systems, Livestock Fencing and Grazing Management Practices.

Conservation Plans were written on **456** new acres.

Conservation practices were applied on **386** acres with practices that protect water quality.

Conservation practices to improve Grazing Lands were applied on **440** acres.

Conservation practices to improve and protect Fish and Wildlife habitat were applied on **443** acres.

Total Acres with Conservation applied in Fiscal Year 2018: **1269 acres**

Farmland Protection for Haywood County Landowners

In North Carolina, agriculture and related businesses contribute \$84 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: Any number of years over ten
4. Permanent Easements: Forever farmland — this easement stays with the land no matter who owns it.



*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. Whether it's the heritage of each individual community, the scenic beauty Western NC is known for, clean air and water that improve the quality of our lives as well as that of local wildlife, conservation matters. And 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.

Haywood County Agricultural Easements

Ryan Manning, Farmland Conservation Technician, handles the VAD and EVAD programs as well as conservation easements.

The District pursues grant funding from various sources to help further efforts in projects like conservation easements, stream bank restoration and education programs.

County Farmland Programs:

Voluntary Ag Districts (VAD) acres: 13,083

Enhanced Voluntary Ag District (EVAD) acres: 1,697.9

Conservation Easements:

Term Easements: 764.9 acres

Dollar value: \$2,301,000

Permanent Conservation Easements: 1,009.5 acres

Dollar value: \$6,898,331



The Pigeon River Award

John (NRCS) and Duane (District) accepted the Pigeon River Award in December at the Haywood Waterways Annual Meeting for their work on the Dotson Branch Stream Corridor Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Project. Details include restoration of 10,000 linear feet of stream channel to proper hydraulic function, stabilization of 18,600 linear feet of eroding stream bank, planting 10.7 acres of stream side trees and shrubs and fencing 3.5 miles to exclude livestock access. Other partners included SWNCRC&D and the NC Division of Water Resources.

Picture by HWA



CONSERVATION EDUCATION



What a great year it's been! It's been a privilege to work with dedicated teachers who go the extra mile to help their students learn more about the environment. Watching the kids gather around the Enviroscope to learn about watersheds and the role we play in water quality, examine the soil during the FFA Land Judging sponsored by the District, hike up steep mountain trails during YES Camp, identify a skull or pelt during Envirothon, draw a poster or put together a slide show for our contests, the enthusiasm in their eyes inspires us to go ever further in teaching about conservation.

Education has always been a priority for soil and water districts; investing time and resources in education for all ages is a win/win proposition for everyone.

— Gail Heathman, Education Coordinator

Program	Number
Fifth Grade Conservation Field Day — Our 36th year!	575 students
Area 1 Envirothon	15 teams
North Carolina Envirothon	2 teams
Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) Camp - 2 Weeks	24 students
Contests: Poster, Essay, Slide Show, Speech & Computer Designed Poster	111 participants
Conservation Teacher of the Year	1
Area FFA Land Judging Competition	10 teams
Resource Conservation Workshop at NCSU	3 students
Pink Francis Memorial Scholarship — Haywood Community College	1
Enviroscope Presentations (40)	645 participants
Resource Materials Distributed (posters, booklets, bookmarks, etc.)	2200 items
<i>Particles and Droplets</i> Teacher Newsletter—Distributed via email	600

Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) CAMP

The District wishes to say a special *thank you* to the Pigeon River Fund for the financial assistance that helps make our YES Camp a fun, memorable and (shhh!) educational experience for young people. Chances are, without the camp, some students would miss out on experiencing the outdoors and learning how fortunate we are to live in such a beautiful place — and why conservation matters.

The students shown here were just beginning to learn about water treatment at the Waynesville Watershed. They also found benthic insects in Richland Creek later that day, visited a dairy farm and ended their day with a visit to the Waynesville Waste Treatment Plant.

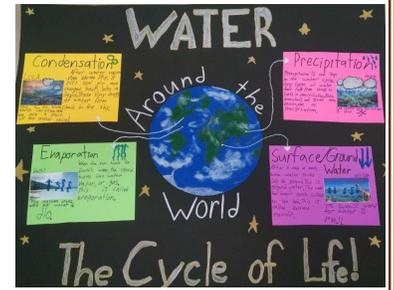


HIGHLIGHTS in EDUCATION



CONTESTS: *Water...the Cycle of Life*

From 3rd through 9th grades, the District offers a variety of fun ways students can learn about conservation through our poster, essay, slide show, speech and computer designed poster contests. For Bethel 3rd grader Jade Cody, the District contest was only the beginning. Her poster went on to win both the Area and State contests and \$300 in prize money ! Congratulations, Jade!



State Winning Poster!

RESOURCE CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

The District sponsored three high school students at the RCW in June. Jena Brown (THS), Kaitlin Moore (PHS) and Nina Dove (THS) were chosen based on their interest in natural resources, demonstrated by participation in Envirothon and the YES Camp. The girls spent a tough week in outdoor study and classroom instruction while housed in a dorm at NCSU. When the 90 students tested at the end of the week, Kaitlin achieved the second highest score, winning a \$275 scholarship and cash. She also was the recipient of the Area 1 Glen Carson Award and was one of 8 finalists for the S. Grady Lane scholarship.



CONSERVATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR: *Linda Estes*

Waynesville Middle School science teacher Linda Estes was honored during Awards Night as the 2018 Conservation Teacher of the Year. Linda stepped in 2 years ago as an Envirothon advisor when one was needed for the enthusiastic students at WMS. Linda never hesitates to look for ways for her students to learn about the environment. She has worked with the WNC Nature Center to involve her students in a Citizen Science project as well as partnering with the GSM Park Service and the Parks in the Classroom program.



AREA 1 ENVIROTHON: FIRST PLACE TEAM!

Tuscola's Envirothon team, *The Avians*, finished 1st place in the Area 1 Envirothon, held at the Mountain Research Station in March. Envirothon is an outdoor environmental competition sponsored by soil and water districts that includes taking challenging tests on 5 subjects: Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and Current Environmental Issues. A total of 15 Haywood teams representing PHS, THS, Shining Rock Academy and Bethel, Waynesville and Canton middle schools joined 43 teams from other Area districts in the event. In addition to *The Avians*, Tuscola's *Nudibranches* and Pisgah's FFA team all qualified for competition at the State Envirothon, traveling to Burlington for the competition. The team advisors were Sue Miller (THS), Joshua Justice (PHS) and Courtney Smith (PHS).

Thanks to grant funding from The Pigeon River Fund, registration fees, substitute teacher pay and travel expenses were covered. We are also grateful to all teachers who served as team advisors!



District Office Manager

After nineteen years with the District, Kila Thompson is retiring this fall. We wish her the best as she enjoys more time to enjoy her family, friends and to explore other pursuits.



In Memory...Carlyle Ferguson



On May 23, 2018 we said a reluctant and unexpected good-bye to our longtime Supervisor and friend, Carlyle Ferguson. Carlyle gave 45 years of dedicated service to the District, with 17 of those years as its Chairman. He also served as a Haywood County Commissioner and on countless other boards including Farm Bureau, Haywood County Community College and the Haywood County Dairyman Association. His church was an important part of his life.

Carlyle's life personified service and dedication; he rarely ever missed a meeting. He set an example for us all in his commitment to the people and things that mattered to him—his beloved family, agriculture, education—and certainly conservation.

Carlyle was an humble man who never thought too highly of himself, so he would be surprised to know the impact his life made on so many others' lives and on this world.

"To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived - that is to have succeeded."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Friends and Partners

The very first soil and water conservation district in the country was established in North Carolina 81 years ago! It took the devastation of the Dust Bowl for America to grasp how vitally important a natural resource soil actually is. The Haywood Soil and Water Conservation District was established sixty-five years ago. The Board of Supervisors and staff remain committed to technical assistance and education so that citizens of Haywood County are able to enjoy the many and vital benefits of clean water and productive soil.

The District works closely with a number of other natural resource agencies, non-profits and other professionals and 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)

Haywood Soil and Water Conservation District is a member of:

- ◇ The Area I Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- ◇ The North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- ◇ The Southeast District Employees Association
- ◇ The National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Special thanks go to the following for much appreciated support:

- ◇ The Haywood County Board of Commissioners and the County Manager
- ◇ Davis Ferguson, our Western Regional Coordinator (Division of Soil and Water Conservation, NCDA&CS)
- ◇ Lynn Sprague & Anita Powell at the Southwestern NC Resource Conservation & Development
- ◇ NCDA & CS—Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund
- ◇ Mountain Research Station
- ◇ The Pigeon River Fund
- ◇ Clean Water Management Trust Fund
- ◇ WNC Communities
- ◇ Division of Water Resources
- ◇ The North Carolina Forest Service
- ◇ Haywood County Extension
- ◇ USDA Farm Services Agency
- ◇ Haywood Waterways Association
- ◇ Haywood County Schools — Administration & Teachers

