

Loam on the Range

AgWRAP Highlight | Creating an Irrigation Pond

Our Soil Conservation Specialist Kyle Watkins is currently managing the construction of a pond on a Chatham county farm operation. This pond was designed to provide a more reliable water source for a crop irrigation system. Partial funding for this project came from the utilization of our Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP).

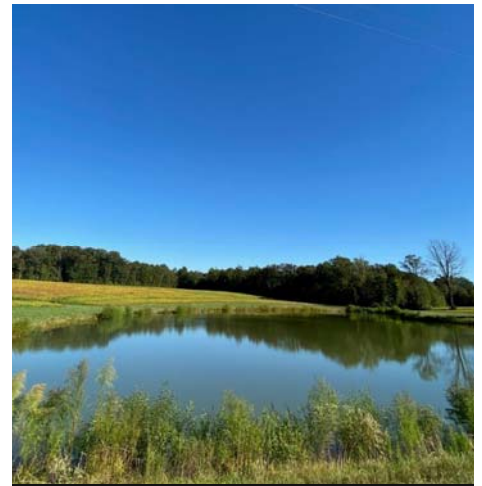
Who is Eligible?

If you are a owner or operator of an existing agricultural operation that has been operating for more than one year and need more water for your operation, you are eligible to participate.

What is the purpose of the program?

The purposes of the AgWRAP are to:

- Identify opportunities to increase water use efficiency, availability and storage
- Implement best management practices (BMPs) to conserve and protect water resources
- Increase water use efficiency
- Increase water storage and availability for agricultural purposes
- Benefits may include increased water supply, erosion control, flood control, and sediment and nutrient reductions from farm fields.



Completed Irrigation Pond

If you would like more information about AgWRAP, please call us at (919) 542-8240.



Irrigation Pond Construction in Progress

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Chatham SWCD's No-Till Drill—Available for Rental

“Out of the long list of nature's gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil.”

- Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett

Using No-Till this Fall

An excerpt from the [article](#) by Spencer Miller

Many farmers till during the fall. This year, we encourage you not to. Leave it be, let it grow. Save time, money and improve your soil's health by joining the farmers who observe “No-Till November.”

The idea for No-Till November came to Neil Sass, an agronomist with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). “I'm always thinking about new ways to talk about soil health,” Sass said. “I thought ‘Hey, No-Shave November is a good way to highlight men's health, why not promote No-Till November as a way to highlight Soil Health?’ It seemed like a pretty good fit.”

No-till is one of the key practices of soil health management systems. According to Sass, the benefits of no-till grow over time and spread far beyond your farm. With no-till, you can improve water quality through prevented erosion. Your soil structure will remain intact, able to absorb more water and handle heavy rain. No-till keeps your soil on your field and out of the watershed. If those aren't enough reasons to “keep the stubble,” Sass proffers some bottom line benefits for farmers, too: No-till will save you time and money. You'll spend less time on your tractor. You'll use less fuel. You'll have less wear and tear on your equipment. No-till is a win-win for your soil and for your pocketbook.

This fall, consider the benefits of no-till through the lenses of soil health, water quality, economics and beneficial microbes. NRCS helps farmers, ranchers and forest landowners plan and implement a wide variety of conservation practices, including no-till.

Chatham SWCD has a no-till drill available for rental. If you are interested in renting our no-till drill, please reach out to Kyle Watkins at (919) 545-8353 or via email at:

kyle.watkins@chathamnc.org for more information.

VAD Benefits

Landowners belonging to a VAD will not be required to connect to County water or sewer. Any assessment fees will be held in abeyance, without interest, unless and until the property is connected.

No governmental agency may condemn any interest in participating farmland without requesting a public hearing to ensure full consideration of the impact of that action upon agricultural, forestland or horticultural land.

Farms enrolled in the VAD may benefit from higher ranking in Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District cost share programs.

Signs identifying the VAD may be provided to qualifying farmland and placed on the property at the discretion of the owners (not within road right-of-ways).

VAD parcels and all property within one-half mile will be mapped by Chatham County GIS. This will inform the public and purchasers of real property that agricultural, horticultural, and forestry activities may occur in these areas. A notice will be posted at the Planning Department, Tax Office, and Agricultural Agencies in the county.

Voluntary Agricultural District Program

Our Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) Program is going exceptionally well. Chatham GIS recently created a new interactive map which will allow you to view parcels currently participating in the program. This new VAD map allows you to zoom in/out and explore all parcels within the county easily. You can access this map via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/y24ay78g>

The purpose of the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) Program is to promote agricultural values and the general welfare of Chatham County by increasing the identity of, and pride in, the agricultural community and its way of life. To encourage the economic and financial health of agriculture, horticulture, and forestry through protection from non-farm development and other negative impacts on properly managed farms.



This program is voluntary, so if you would like more information, please visit our website or reach out to us, (919) 542-8240. We would love to hear from you!



Education News



Lower Cape Fear River Basin

Conservation Poster Contest

We are now accepting entries for our 2020—2021 Conservation Poster Contest.

Our theme this year is, **“We all live in a Watershed”**. This contest is open to public, private, Charter or home schooled Chatham students in grades 3-6. Complete contest details can be found on our website: <https://tinyurl.com/y4v4bzgk>



NC Watershed Map

Completed posters can be dropped off in our lobby, contact-free. Entries are being accepted M-F this Fall until our final deadline which is 4pm on December 6, 2020.

For more information about our programs or events, please call Brandy Oldham at (919) 545-8440.

2021 Envirothon

The NC Envirothon is an exciting natural resource education program designed to challenge students in an interactive, outdoor competition where middle and high school teams (consisting of 3-5 students) are tested in areas of Wildlife, Forestry, Aquatic Ecology, Soils and Land Use and Current Environmental Issues.

Plans for Envirothon are moving forward! A decision will be made with the safety and well-being of all students, advisors, staff, and volunteers at the forefront. More information to come.



Woods Charter Envirothon Team

Staff Updates

Happy Retirement to Brenda Williams!

Brenda was our District Administrator and Education Coordinator for the past 30 years! We want to take a moment to say thank you for all the hard work and dedication to the department and our programs. She worked on numerous committees and projects during her time with Chatham SWCD. She helped Pittsboro, Siler City and Silk Hope Elementary Schools with the creation of Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers.

Brenda also helped coordinate the installation of a pier at Pittsboro Town Park that can be used by students to observe wildlife and gather water samples for testing. These are only a few of the impacts Brenda has made here in Chatham County for students and citizens alike.

Thank you Brenda! Sit back and relax, enjoy retirement!



Brenda Williams at Ag Fest



Brandy Oldham

Welcome, Brandy!

Chatham SWCD has hired Brandy Oldham to fill the vacancy left by Brenda's retirement for District Administrator and Education Coordinator. Brandy is a Chatham County native, having grown up in Bear Creek and Goldston, attended Chatham Central High School, and now lives in Pittsboro. Brandy brings exceptional customer service, organizational and administrative skills and being a self proclaimed technophile is already navigating us into the 21st century.

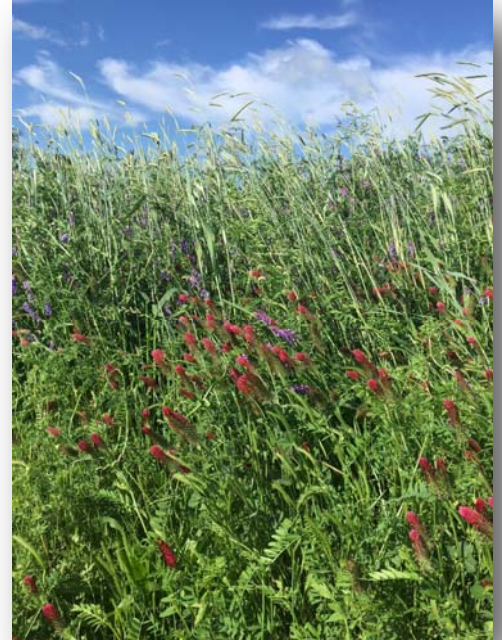
Brandy is excited to assist Chatham SWCD with our mission to ensure the wise use of our natural resources (soil, water, air, plants and animals) by providing technical and educational services to land users.

Fall Planting | Winter Cover Crops

Now is the perfect time to plant your winter cover crops! With increased fertilizer costs and water restrictions, the use of cover crops is becoming popular again for improving soil health and shading the soil from excessive heat. Cover crops have the potential to provide multiple benefits in a cropping system. The species of cover crop selected along with its management determine the benefits and returns.

Some of the economic and environmental benefits of using cover crops include:

- ◆ Weed suppression
- ◆ Reduces soil erosion from wind and rain
- ◆ Increases water infiltration
- ◆ Reduces soil compaction
- ◆ Increases organic matter
- ◆ Activity against bacteria, fungi, insects, and nematodes
- ◆ Improving soil structure by increased soil microbial activity
- ◆ Nutrient cycling (plants take up nutrients that may otherwise leach out of the soil profile)



Before planting a cover crop, identify which benefits or goals are most important. Soil samples should be taken to determine if amendments are needed for the cool season cover crop. Use the soil test results and needs to best select the grasses, legumes, and/or forbs that meet the desired goals. A cool season cover crop planting can be either monotypic or a multi-species mixture. An advantage of multi-species mixtures is their ability to address multiple objectives at the same time.

Cover crops are seeded either by broadcasting the seed onto the surface of a prepared seedbed or by using a seed drill. Drilling places seeds directly into the soil, providing better planting depth control and enhancing seed to soil contact. Good seed to soil contact helps protect the seeds from constant wetting and drying cycles that may hinder germination.

Chatham SWCD has a no-till drill available for rental. If you are interested in renting our no-till drill, please reach out to Kyle Watkins at (919) 545-8353 for more information.



Winter cover crop.

Fall Planting (cont.)

Recommended Planting Dates for Winter Cover Crop Mixes		
Winter Cover Crop Mixes	Seeding Rate Ranges (lbs/ac) (Drilled)	Recommended Planting Date Ranges for the Piedmont Region
Cereal Rye Daikon Radish	45-55 3-4	Aug 25—Oct 15
Cereal Rye Crimson Clover	40-50 10-15	Aug 25 – Oct 15
Cereal Rye Crimson Clover Daikon Radish	30-35 8-10 1.5-2	Aug 25 – Oct 15
Cereal Rye Triticale Oats Crimson Clover Daikon Radish	25-30 12-15 8-10 8-10 1.5-2	Aug 25 – Oct 15
Cereal Rye Annual Ryegrass Austrian Winter Pea Crimson Clover Hairy Vetch Radish Turnip	12-15 2-3 8-10 1.5-2 2-3 1 1	Aug 25 – Oct 15

NRCS— Common Adapted Winter Cover Crop Mixes for NC

Chatham SWCD

Mission

To ensure the wise use of our natural resources, soil, water, air, plants and animals by providing technical and educational services to land users.

Cost Share Programs

Chatham SWCD is always accepting applications for our cost share programs. We can provide financial and technical assistance to Chatham County land users. Please contact us for more details at (919) 542-8240.

The **North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP)** is designed to address water quality issues on agricultural lands throughout the state. Common "Best Management Practices," or BMPs for short, include Livestock Exclusion Systems, Nutrient Management Practices, and Sediment Management.



The **Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP)** is set up based on the same procedures and outlines of the ACSP and offers similar water quality improving practices, but on non-agricultural lands. Typical BMPs include: Backyard Rain Gardens, Riparian Buffer for nutrient reduction, and Critical Area Planting.

The **Agriculture Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP)** is designed to identify opportunities to increase water use efficiency, availability and storage and in some cases help fund BMP to conserve and protect water resources. BMPs in this program include irrigation ponds and irrigation wells.

District Supervisors:

J. Lynn Mann, Chair
Johnny Glosson, Vice Chair
Rich Hayes, Treasurer/Secretary
R. Edward McLaurin, Member
Keith Stanley, Member

District Staff:

Susannah Goldston, District Director & Environmental Specialist
Kyle Watkins, Soil Conservation Specialist
Brandy Oldham, District Administrator & Education Coordinator

NRCS Staff:

Matt Wells, NRCS Soil Conservationist
Diana R. Irizarry, NRCS Supervisory Soil Conservationist

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our programs and services.

Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District
1192 US 64 W Business
Suite 200
Pittsboro, NC 27312

(919) 542-8240

Visit us on the web at
www.chathamnc.org/swcd

Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District—Yours for life!

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Pittsboro, NC 27312

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