

Loam on the Range

ACSP Highlight | Stream Crossings

A stream crossing is a stabilized area or a structure constructed across a stream to provide a travel way for people, livestock, equipment, or vehicles. Stream crossings can be used to provide access to another land unit, improve water quality by reducing sediment and nutrient loading of the stream, or reduce streambank and streambed erosion. This practice applies where an intermittent or perennial water course exists and a ford crossing is needed.

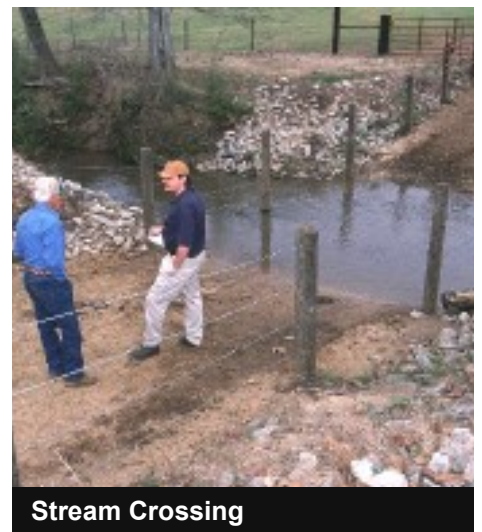
Who is Eligible?

If you are a owner or operator of an existing agricultural operation that has been operating for more than three years, you are eligible to participate.

What is the purpose of the program?

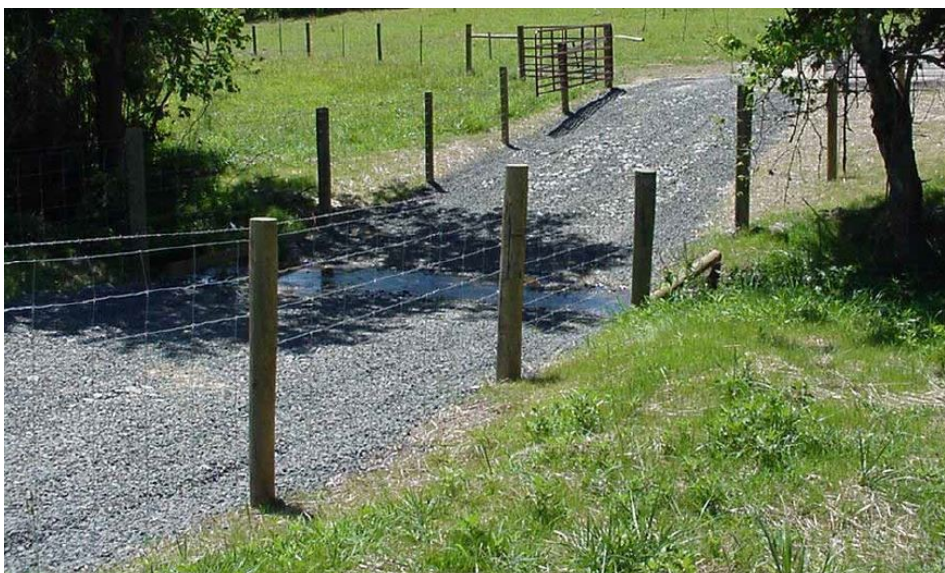
The purposes of the ACSP are to:

- Develop individual conservation plans
- Identify the best management practices (BMPs) best suited for your particular operation
- Design BMPs and help ensure their longevity
- Enter information of a cost share contract for installation and maintenance of BMPs



Stream Crossing

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



Completed stream crossing

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Photo Credit: Jason Johnson, USDA's NRCS

Plowing isn't the only way to prepare a field for next spring's planting.

Evenly distribute residue that will be left in the field while harvesting your cash crop to manage against erosion and allow for a uniform breakdown of nutrients and organic matter. Residue can provide a valuable base of cover for your ground over winter.

Park Your Plow: 5 Tips for the No-Till-Curious

An excerpt from the [article](#) by Elizabeth Creech, NRCS

Reduced erosion. Saved time and fuel. Improved nutrient cycling, soil moisture, and resiliency in the face of drought. You likely already know the potential benefits of no-till.

No-till farmers grow crops with minimal disturbance to their fields and the organisms that call them home. This builds healthier soils while reducing money spent on fuel and labor – a win-win.

Use these 5 tips to go from no-till-curious to no-till farmer.

1. Spread your residue during fall harvest.
2. Don't forget about cover crops.
3. Choose equipment with your end-goal in mind.
4. Treat no-till adoption as a marathon, not a sprint. Track results along the way.
5. Give us a call. We're here to help.

Farmers across the country have reduced erosion, held valuable nutrients in-field, saved money on fuel, and increased their soil's resiliency by minimizing tillage.

Is this the year you'll try no-till? If so, having a strong plan in place will help you leave your plow parked for good. 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@chathamcountync.gov 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.

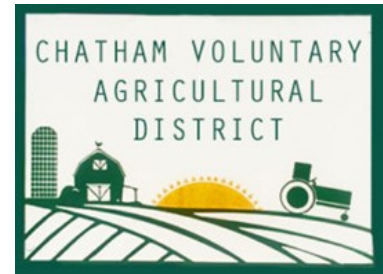
Signs identifying the VAD may be provided to qualifying farmland and placed on the property at the discretion of the owners (not within road right-of-ways).

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



Woods Charter Envirothon Team | 2018

2021 Envirothon

The **Area 3 Envirothon** will be held virtually, beginning March 22, 2021 and ending with a virtual awards ceremony on March 29, 2021. Please visit the Area 3 Envirothon page for more details: <https://www.ncarea3envirothon.org/home>

Interested teams may register online before March 4, 2021. This year, there will be no registration fee. Register via the following link: <https://www.ncarea3envirothon.org/team-information/virtual-registration-information>

The **NC Envirothon** will be tentatively held April 16-17, 2021. The NC Envirothon Committee is working on the format that the State Envirothon will have in 2021. A decision will be made in early 2021. This decision will be made with the safety and well-being of all students, advisors, staff, and volunteers at the forefront. Please visit our website for more updates on Envirothon!

For more information about education programs or events, please contact Brandy Oldham at (919) 545-8440 or via email at brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov

What is Envirothon?

Going 25 years strong, 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.

The Envirothon program is an effective educational tool, capable of supplementing environmental education both inside and outside the classroom.



District Updates

New Terms with the Chatham SWCD Board of Supervisors Begin for J. Lynn Mann and Keith Stanley

The Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to announce that Supervisors J. Lynn Mann and Keith Stanley have been re-elected and re-appointed, respectively, in their positions on the Chatham SWCD Board of Supervisors.



Each district is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors. Three Supervisors are elected on the general ballot as non-partisan candidates during the regular election of county officers, and two are appointed by the NC Soil and Water Commission upon recommendation of the local District Board of Supervisors.

Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors are responsible for establishing and prioritizing soil and water conservation practices that directly impact Chatham County. This is done through the installation and implementation of best management practices (BMPs). BMPs improve and protect natural resources, and allows Supervisors to partner with local landowners and organizations to determine how to best meet our local natural resource needs.

Chairman, J. Lynn Mann (below, left) was re-elected to our Board and has been with us since 2002. Keith Stanley (below, right) was re-appointed, having served our Board since 2004. We are so grateful for their service to Chatham County, and look forward to the next 4 years!



SWCD Board Chairman J. Lynn Mann



SWCD Supervisor Keith Stanley

Carbon Farm Planning

Chatham SWCD is one of a handful of North Carolina SWCDs awarded an opportunity to participate in a Carbon Farm Planning program offered by the NC Foundation of Soil & Water Conservation in partnership with the Carbon Cycle Institute. This training is a pilot program and the first of its kind on the east coast. It is a year-long program that will provide training and tools for SWCDs to support agricultural operations in meeting the challenges of climate change.



Carbon Farm Planning focuses on working land's ability to capture and store carbon in on-farm carbon pools: permanent and standing vegetation, harvested crop, and soil organic matter. Implementing a successful carbon farm plan moves the farm operation towards a net increase of captured carbon in the agroecosystem.

When implemented, a successful carbon farm plan provides multiple co-benefits such as improved soil health, soil water holding capacity, and resilience to environmental stress. Carbon farm planning can also contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and increased carbon sequestration through implementation of conservation practices whose greenhouse gas reduction benefits can be quantified.

A common example of a conservation best management practice is a riparian buffer. Riparian buffers provide stormwater runoff reduction and filtration as well as protecting streambanks from degradation by livestock. In addition to these benefits, if one acre of grassland is converted to a riparian buffer with woody vegetation, approximately nine tons of CO_2 is sequestered per year. That's equivalent to an average household's annual energy use CO_2 emissions!

We are excited to take part in this opportunity!



Carbon Farm Plan Illustration from LandSmart.org

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.



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.

Important Dates

March 4, 2021: Area 3 Spring Meeting

March 4, 2021: Area 3 Envirothon Registration Deadline

March 22—29, 2021: Area 3 Envirothon

April 2, 2021: Office Closed for Good Friday

April 16-17, 2021: NC Envirothon

May 31, 2021: Office Closed for Memorial Day

District Supervisors:

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

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