

Loam on the Range

ACSP Highlight | Critical Area Planting

The North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program (ACSP) helps address nonpoint source pollution by providing technical and financial resources through a voluntary, incentive-based program designed to improve water quality through the installation of various best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural lands directly involved with agriculture production.

Critical Area Planting means an area of highly erodible land that cannot be stabilized by ordinary conservation treatment on which permanent perennial vegetative cover is established and protected to improve water quality. Benefits may include reduced soil erosion and sedimentation.

Who is Eligible?

Landowners of an existing agricultural operation that has been operating for more than three years.

How does ACSP work?

Chatham SWCD is accepting applications! Applications are ranked based on resource concerns identified in Chatham county. Applicants can be reimbursed up to 75 percent of a predetermined average cost for each BMP installed. The applicant is responsible for 25 percent of the costs. If you would like more information about the ACSP or wish to apply, please call Kyle Watkins at (919) 545-8353 or email: kyle.watkins@chathamcountync.gov.



Before



Completed Critical Area Planting

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Chatham County Soil and Water's New Haybuster 77C No-Till Seed Drill

What to know before renting:

- Thirty-five horsepower minimum is needed to operate the drill.
- Rear hydraulic hook-up is needed on the tractor.
- The drill is small enough (7.6ft wide) to access smaller acreage but can still handle the big jobs.
- The drill can be used to seed cool and warm season grasses, legumes, small grains, wildflowers, soybeans and more.

New Haybuster 77C No-Till Seed Drill Now Available for Rent

Spring planting season is here, and the Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District is excited to announce that its new no-till drill is available for rent. The new Haybuster 77C is available for rent by Chatham County residents at a cost of \$10 per acre with a minimum \$75 charge.

Why using no-till is important:

There are many benefits to using the no-till drill including:

- reduces soil erosion by establishing living ground cover
- improves germination of seed compared to broadcasting
- reduces labor required per acre
- decreases soil disturbance, which means healthier soil and has additional benefits:
 - ◇ increases water infiltration
 - ◇ decreases soil moisture evaporation
 - ◇ conserves and improves organic matter
 - ◇ improves soil structure
 - ◇ promotes biological activity
 - ◇ reduces nutrient losses

The Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District's older TruAx No-Till Drill is still available for rent as well. Fall will be here before you know it and the schedule can fill up quickly. If you are interested in renting one of our no-till drills, 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.

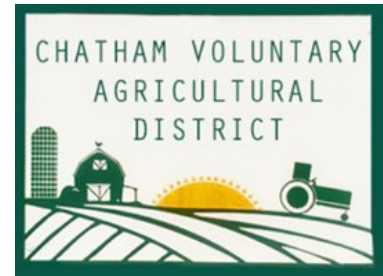
Signs identifying the VAD may be provided to qualifying farmland and placed on the property at the discretion of the owners (not within road right-of-ways).

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>

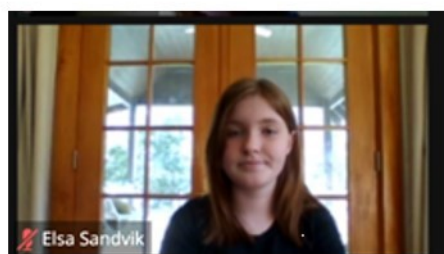
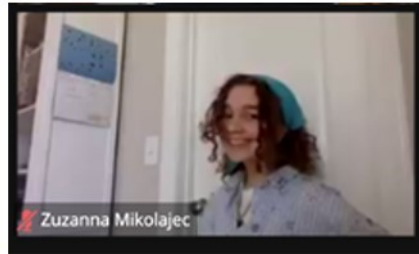
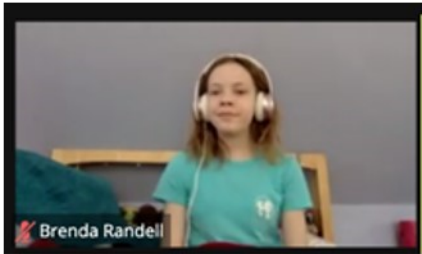
The purpose of the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) Program is to promote agricultural values and the general welfare of Chatham County by increasing the identity of, and pride in, the agricultural community and its way of life. To encourage the economic and financial health of agriculture, horticulture, 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!



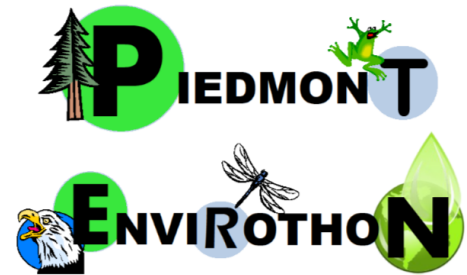
Education News



Margaret B. Pollard | Pollard Team 1

2021 Area 3 Envirothon

The **Area 3 Envirothon** was held virtually during the last week of March. Chatham County had 5 teams competing this year. 2 high schools teams, both from Woods Charter School and 3 middle school teams, 1 from Woods Charter School and 2 from Margret B. Pollard Middle School. We are so proud of them for all their hard work and dedication to Area 3's Envirothon during such a tough year.



Sponsored By: Area 3 Soil and Water Conservation Districts

A virtual awards ceremony was held to announce the winning teams. If you would like to watch the awards ceremony, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/rxu7e8kj>

Woods Charter team NaCl...That's I(c)onic placed 1st and team Kick-Bass placed 2nd in the high school competition. Woods Charter team The Three Muskrateers placed 1st in the middle school competition. Margret B. Pollard team Pollard #3 placed 2nd and team Pollard #1 placed 3rd in the middle school competition.

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

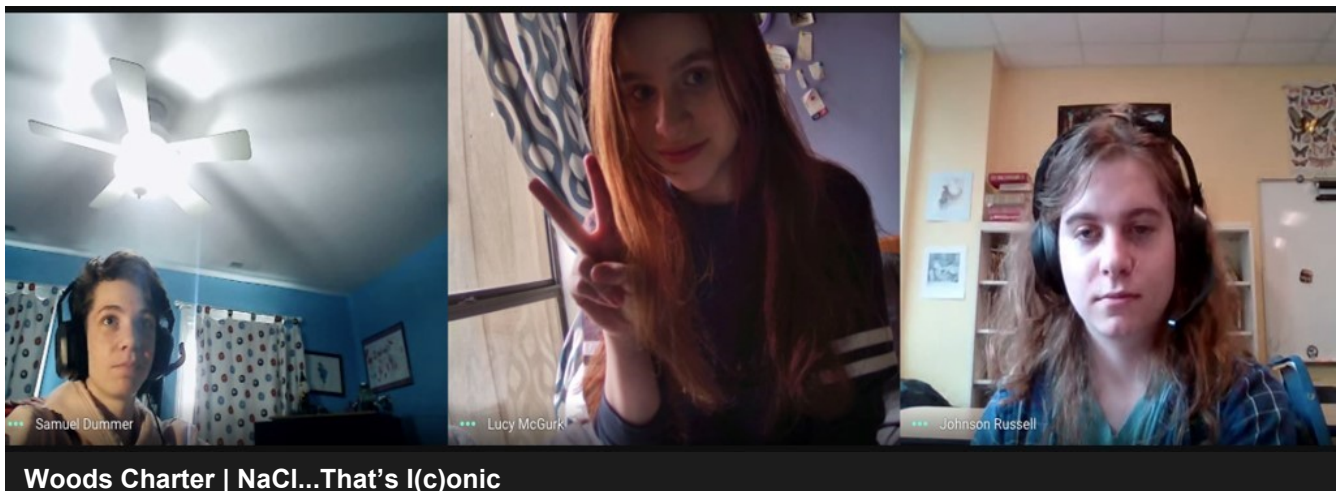


Education News (Continued)

2021 NC Envirothon

The **NC Envirothon** was held during the week of April 16-17, 2021. All 5 Chatham County teams went on to compete in the NC Envirothon. Teams were tested on April 16th under the supervision of proctors both virtually and in-person. Teams also submitted a pre-recorded Oral Presentation which was viewed and scored by judging panels on the morning of April 16th.

A virtual awards ceremony was held on April 17th to announce the winners. We are thrilled with our teams and all their efforts in participating in this year's virtual NC Envirothon! Woods Charter School team NaCl...That's I(c)onic placed 5th in the high school competition. Woods Charter School team Kick-Bass placed 10th in the high school competition. Middle School team The Three Muskrateers from Woods Charter School placed 7th in the middle school competition. Margret B. Pollard teams Pollard #1 placed 11th and Pollard #3 placed 12th in the middle school competition. Congratulations teams and advisors! We thank you so much for all your hard work and dedication to Envirothon.



What is Envirothon?

Going 30 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.

Soil Organisms

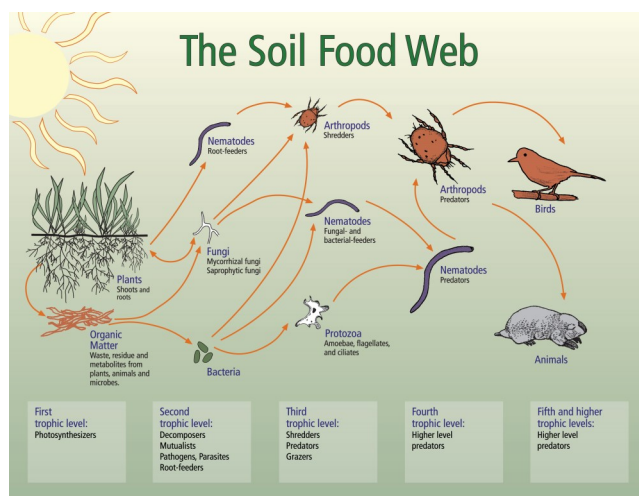
Soil Food Web by Elaine R. Ingham

(an excerpt from NRCS - <https://tinyurl.com/pahm45nd>)

Soil Biology and the Landscape

An incredible diversity of organisms make up the soil food web. They range in size from the tiniest one-celled bacteria, algae, fungi, and protozoa, to the more complex nematodes and micro-arthropods, to the visible earthworms, insects, small vertebrates, and plants. As these organisms eat, grow, and move through the soil, they make it possible to have clean water, clean air, healthy plants, and moderated water flow.

There are many ways that the soil food web is an integral part of landscape processes. Soil organisms decompose organic compounds, including manure, plant residue, and pesticides, preventing them from entering water and becoming pollutants. They sequester nitrogen and other nutrients that might otherwise enter groundwater, and they fix nitrogen from the atmosphere, making it available to plants. Many organisms enhance soil aggregation and porosity, thus increasing infiltration and reducing runoff. Soil organisms prey on crop pests and are food for above-ground animals.



What do soil organisms do?

Growing and reproducing are the primary activities of all living organisms. As individual plants and soil organisms work to survive, they depend on interactions with each other. By-products from growing roots and plant residue feed soil organisms. In turn, soil organisms support plant health as they decompose organic matter, cycle nutrients, enhance soil structure, and control the populations of soil organisms including crop pests. The living component of soil, the food web, is complex and has different compositions in different ecosystems. Management of croplands, rangelands, forestlands, and gardens benefits from and affects the food web.

The Importance of the Soil Food Web

The living component of soil, the food web, is complex and has different compositions in different ecosystems. Management of croplands, rangelands, forestlands, and gardens benefits from and affects the food web. The next unit of the Soil Biology Primer, The Food Web & Soil Health, introduces the relationship of soil biology to agricultural productivity, biodiversity, carbon sequestration and to air and water quality. The remaining six units of the Soil Biology Primer describe the major groups of soil organisms: bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, arthropods, and earthworms.

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

June 19-26, 2021: Chatham Creek Week (www.chathamcreekweek.org)

June 29, 2021: 4-H Conservation Club Interest Meeting—5:30pm at CCACC

July 5, 2021: Office Closed for Independence Day

August 23-27, 2021: CET Training—Staff will be out of the office.

September 6, 2021: Office Closed for Labor 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
Kenneth Payne, NRCS Civil Engineering Technician

Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District

Contact Us

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

Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District

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Visit us on the web at
www.chathamcountync.gov/swcd

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