

Loam on the Range

ACSP Highlight | Heavy Use Area Protection

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.

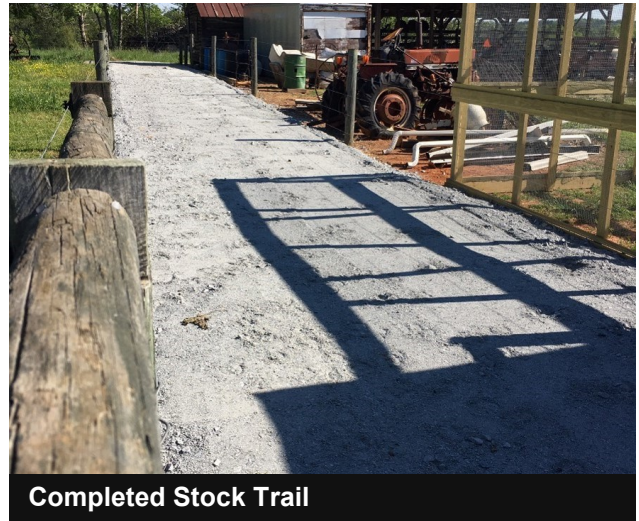
Heavy Use Area Protection means an area used frequently and intensively by animals which must be stabilized by surfacing with suitable materials to improve water quality. Benefits may include reduced soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution from dissolved, particulate, and sediment-attached substances.

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. If you would like more information or wish to apply, please contact Kyle Watkins, (919) 545-8353 or kyle.watkins@chathamcountync.gov.



Completed Stock Trail



Completed Heavy Use Area Protection

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A no-till seed drill can significantly minimize disruption of your soil.

“The principles of building healthy soils are the same everywhere—you have to stop tilling the soil and switch from a monoculture crop rotation to one with a diversity of crops that should include cover crops”

-David Lamm, NRCS

Discover the Cover!

Farmers realize benefits, challenges of soil-improving cover crops

A growing number of farmers throughout the nation have “discovered the cover”—and for some very good reasons. They’re increasingly recognizing that by using cover crops and diverse rotations, it’s possible to actually improve the health and function of their soil.

According to David Lamm, a soil health expert with USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service in Greensboro, N.C., farmers are also reaping the benefits healthy soils bring to their operations in the form of better nutrient cycling, improved water infiltration and more consistent yields over time.

“The principles of building healthy soils are the same everywhere—you have to stop tilling the soil and switch from a monoculture crop rotation to one with a diversity of crops that should include cover crops,” Lamm said. “But the path to soil health is different on each farm.” Lamm said that keeping the soil covered and growing with living roots is a critical component in improving the health and function of the soil. “That means understanding how to manage cover crops in a soil health management system. And that can be one of the biggest challenges farmers face.”

According to Lamm, cover crop and cash crop selections and rotation sequences should be chosen to fit the farmer’s resource concerns and priorities, and the resources available at that farm.

If you are interested in renting one of our no-till drills or learning more about cover crops and how to manage your soil, 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.

The Voluntary Agricultural District Program is voluntary. Residents interested in finding out more can visit our website or reach out to us by phone at (919) 542-8240. We would love to hear from you!



Education News



Poster Example Provided by Cabarrus County Soil & Water Conservation District

2021-2022 Conservation Poster Contest

The Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District is sponsoring a Conservation Poster contest this year! Our theme for 2021-2022 is, "**Soil & Water... Yours for Life**". This is your opportunity to get creative and explore what our theme means to you. Any public, private, charter or home-schooled Chatham County student in grades 3rd - 6th may enter a poster.

Entries for the poster contest are due to the district office no later than 5:00 pm on or before January 14, 2022. We are offering no-contact drop off in our lobby. Our lobby entrance is located on the west side of the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center at 1192 US 64 W Business, Suite 200, Pittsboro, NC 27312. If you need poster board, please reach out as well. We keep a small supply on hand for those who are in need.

Not only will this contest provide a great way for students to explore an issue on their own, but there are monetary prizes for the winning students! 1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners from each grade level entry will receive a certificate and prize. The 1st place winner from each grade level in the county contest will be eligible for the Area contest.

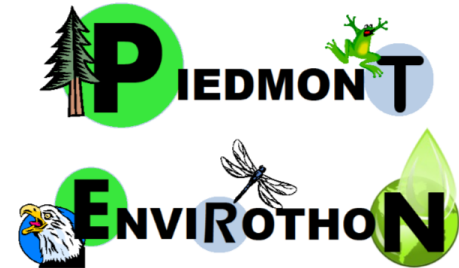
For more information about education programs or events, please contact Brandy Oldham at (919) 545-8440 or via email at brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov



Education News (Continued)

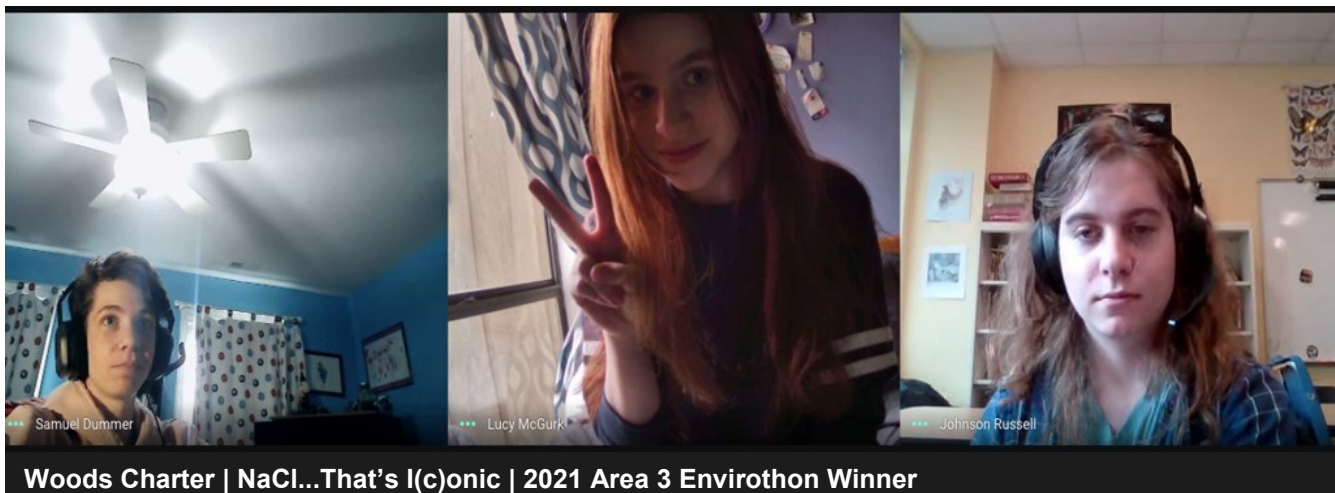
2022 Area 3 Envirothon

The Area 3 Envirothon plans are coming down the pipeline! We are hopeful that more teams will be able to participate this year, and that we can compete in person again! If you are interested in starting an Envirothon team there are a few things you need to know. Teams must consist of 3-5 members from the same school, non-traditional school, or youth organization; such as scout groups, 4-H, science, or Envirothon clubs. Middle school Envirothon teams include grades 5 through 8. High school Envirothon teams include grades 9 through 12. All teams must have at least one adult advisor. Team advisors will guide students through meetings, studying, field trips, and more throughout the year in preparation for competition.



Sponsored By: Area 3 Soil and Water Conservation Districts

If you would like to know more about starting an Envirothon team, please reach out to Brandy Oldham at (919) 545-8440 or via email at brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov Resources are available to help you!



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.

Healthy Soil for Life

Excerpt from an article by NRCS | (<https://tinyurl.com/ff2j2x>)

Soil health, also referred to as soil quality, is defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. This definition speaks to the importance of managing soils so they are sustainable for future generations. We need to remember that soil contains living organisms that when provided the basic necessities of life - food, shelter, and water - perform functions required to produce food and fiber.



Only "living" things can have health, so viewing soil as a living ecosystem reflects a fundamental shift in the way we care for our nation's soils. Soil isn't an inert growing medium, but rather is teeming with billions of bacteria, fungi, and other microbes that are the foundation of an elegant symbiotic ecosystem. Soil is an ecosystem that can be managed to provide nutrients for plant growth, absorb and hold rainwater for use during dryer periods, filter and buffer potential pollutants from leaving our fields, serve as a

firm foundation for agricultural activities, and provide habitat for soil microbes to flourish and diversify to keep the ecosystem running smoothly.

Healthy soil gives us clean air and water, bountiful crops and forests, productive grazing lands, diverse wildlife, and beautiful landscapes. Soil does all this by performing five essential functions:

- ◇ Regulating water - Soil helps control where rain, snowmelt, and irrigation water goes. Water and dissolved solutes flow over the land or into and through the soil.
- ◇ Sustaining plant and animal life - The diversity and productivity of living things depends on soil.
- ◇ Filtering and buffering potential pollutants - The minerals and microbes in soil are responsible for filtering, buffering, degrading, immobilizing, and detoxifying organic and inorganic materials.
- ◇ Cycling nutrients - Carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, and many other nutrients are stored, transformed, and cycled in the soil.
- ◇ Physical stability and support - Soil structure provides a medium for plant roots.



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

November 11, 2021: Office Closed for Veteran's Day

November 25-26, 2021: Office Closed for Thanksgiving

December 23-27, 2021: Office Closed for Christmas

December 31, 2021: Office Closed for News Year's Day

January 14, 2022: Deadline for Conservation Poster Contest Entries

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:

JaBioas Glenn, 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

1192 US 64 W Business
Suite 200
Pittsboro, NC 27312

(919) 542-8240

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

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District

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Pittsboro, NC 27312

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