

ACSP Highlight | Nutrient Management

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.

A Nutrient Management Practice means a definitive plan to manage the amount, form, placement and timing of the application of nutrients to minimize entry of nutrients to surface and groundwater and improve water quality. The practice can be implemented to support one or more of the following purposes:

- To minimize agricultural nonpoint source pollution of surface and groundwater resources
- To properly utilize manure or organic by-products as a plant nutrient source
- To protect air quality by reducing odors, nitrogen emissions (ammonia, oxides of nitrogen), and the formation of atmospheric particulates
- To maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil
- To budget, supply, and conserve nutrients for plant production

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Litter Spreader

Who is Eligible?

If you are a landowner or renter of an existing agricultural operation that has been operating for more than three years, you are eligible to apply for the North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program.

How does ACSP work?

The Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District is accepting applications! Applications are ranked based on resource concerns identified in Chatham County. Please contact Joe Trimnal

by phone (919) 545-8353 or email joe.trimnal@chathamcountync.gov to apply.



Haybuster 77C No-till Seed Drill

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

-Hugh Hammond Bennett

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. Building healthy, resilient soil takes time. Some farmers report yield increases after their first year of no-till, but that shouldn’t be your main goal.

You can quantify several economic benefits of switching to no-till: fuel savings, time savings, eventual fertilizer reductions. By tracking these measures along with changes in yield, you’ll gain a truer sense of the impact of no-till across your operation.

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

- Spread your residue during fall harvest.
- Don’t forget about cover crops.
- Choose equipment with your end-goal in mind.
- Treat no-till adoption as a marathon, not a sprint. Track results along the way.

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 Soil & Water has two no-till drills available for rental. If you are interested in renting one of our no-till drills please reach out to Joe Trimnal at (919) 545-8353 or

joe.trimnal@chathamcountync.gov

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.

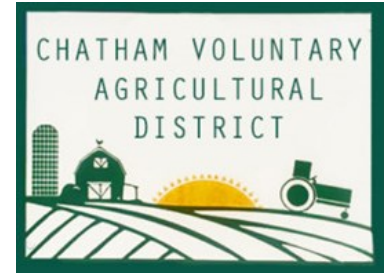
Signs identifying the VAD may be provided to qualifying farmland and placed on the property at the discretion of the owners (not within road right-of-ways).

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

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.

Qualifying farmland must be a bona fide farm, located in an unincorporated area, agree not to develop or use parcels for purposes outside of farm-use, and manage for highly erodible land (HEL) if necessary.



The Voluntary Agricultural District Program is a voluntary program. The term of the agreement is ten years, however, a landowner may revoke this agreement at any time by notifying the Agriculture Advisory Board in writing.

Residents interested in finding out more can visit our website or reach out to us by phone at (919) 542-8228. Residents may also apply online: <https://arcg.is/0TGCTv>



2023 Envirothon



2023 Area 3 Envirothon—HS Team Ayrshire Attack

The **Area 3 Envirothon** was held on March 14th at Elon University. Chatham County had 4 teams participate this year. 1 high school team and 3 middle school teams. All middle school teams are eligible to advance to the NC Envirothon. Congratulations to all teams!

The **NC Envirothon** will be held April 28th and 29th at Cedarock Park in Burlington, NC. The top 7 teams at the Area 3 Envirothon will automatically advance to the NC Envirothon.

For more information about forming an Envirothon team, or for information about our education programs please contact Brandy Oldham at (919) 545-8440.

What is 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.

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



Right—Pangea Proxima team identifies aquatic macroinvertebrates in aquatics training at the 2023 Area 3 Envirothon.

Education News

Resource Conservation Workshop

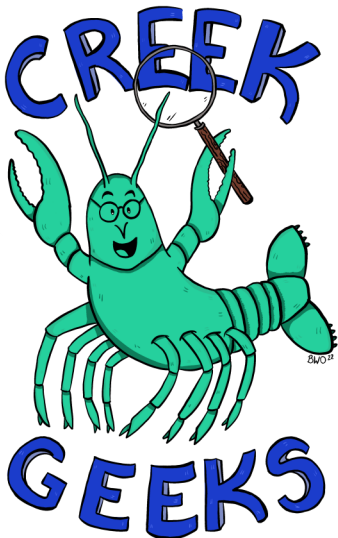
The Resource Conservation Workshop (RCW) is a weeklong workshop for high school students hosted by the Association, the Division, NCSU and the Soil & Water Conservation Society – Hugh Hammond Bennett Chapter. Student participants are housed at NCSU campus dormitories under the guidance of live-in counselors. The week involves hands-on study and participation in a wide range of conservation topics. Student participants learn about natural resources and management in today's global environment. Awards and scholarships can be won and are presented to students under several awards programs - <http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/educational/RCW.html>. This year's RCW will take place June 25-30th.



If you have a high school student who is interested in applying for RCW, please reach out to Brandy Oldham by phone (919) 545-8440 or email brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov. Applications are available online (<https://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/educational/documents/APPLICATIONFORM.pdf>) and are due by April 14th.

2nd Annual Creek Geeks Field Day

The Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District is teaming up with Outdoor Science Labs and the Loves Creek Watershed Stewards to coordinate a field day event on Saturday, April 22nd from 1pm to 3:30 pm. Our rain date for this event is Sunday, April 23rd. This event is free and open to the public. Please join us for a fun, educational afternoon at Boling Lane Park in Siler City (302 S Fir Ave, Siler City, NC 27344).



Planned activities include a tour of best management practices implemented at the park, non-point source pollution activity, and an aquatic macroinvertebrates activity. Dress for the weather and to possibly get wet.

Please register using the following link: <https://forms.gle/dJzsuDw1UdnZfoPd6>

Special thanks to The Triangle Community Foundation and EPA for their support!

District News

Chatham County's Spring Ag Fest is Back!

Chatham County invites residents to join us for our 4th annual Spring Ag Fest at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center (CCACC) 1192 US 64 W Business, Pittsboro, NC on Saturday, March 25, 2023, from 10 am to 2 pm.

The Spring Ag Fest is a celebration of Chatham County's agriculture, forestry, and natural resources. The event will offer something for everyone: livestock arena events, demonstrations, food, and more.

Indoor and outdoor exhibitors and vendors will highlight local farms, farmers' markets, sustainable agriculture, agricultural support and advocacy, agribusiness, beekeeping, livestock, forestry, green industry, wildlife, conservation, and much more. We will have FREE pony rides for kids sponsored by the Chatham County Farm Bureau! Visitors will get to meet Smokey Bear and chat with our local forest rangers.



Over 75 indoor and outdoor exhibitors and vendors offer something for everyone! Photo by Debbie Roos.



Folks of all ages enjoyed meeting the oxen team! Photo by Debbie Roos.

Several food trucks will offer tasty options for lunch. The event is free and open to the public. We encourage visitors to bring canned goods for our local food banks, CORA and West Chatham Food Bank.

For more details including parking information and maps please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2zxjtdw9>

Huge thank you to everyone helping make this year's Ag Fest a success!

Cost Share Programs

The Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District 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) 545-8353.

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 25: Spring Ag Fest at the CCACC, Pittsboro, NC—10am-2pm

April 7: Good Friday (Office Closed)

April 22: Creek Geeks Field Day at Boling Lane Park—1-3:30pm

April 28-29: NC Envirothon

May 29: Memorial Day (Office Closed)

June 19: Juneteenth (Office Closed)

July 4: Independence Day (Office Closed)

District Supervisors:

J. Lynn Mann, Chair, Elected
Johnny Glosson, Vice Chair, Elected
Rich Hayes, Secretary, Elected
Keith Stanley, Treasurer, Appointed
Mike Sturdivant, Board Member, Appointed

District Staff:

Susannah Goldston, District Director & Environmental Specialist
Joe Trimnal, Soil Conservation Specialist
Brandy Oldham, District Administrator & Education Coordinator

NRCS Staff:

Vacant, 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.chathamcountync.gov/swcd

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