

## ACSP Highlight | Rooftop Runoff 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 Rooftop Runoff Management System means a system of collection and stabilization practices (drip line stabilization, guttering, collection boxes, etc.) to prevent rainfall runoff from agricultural rooftops from causing erosion where vegetative practices are insufficient to address erosion concerns and protect water quality.

### 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](mailto:joe.trimnal@chathamcountync.gov) to apply.

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Rooftop Runoff Management Before (left) and After (right).

# No-Till Drill Rentals

## Saving Money, Time and Soil: The Economics of No-Till Farming

Excerpt from NRCS article posted by Elizabeth Creech

For farmers across the country, it comes as no surprise to hear that conservation tillage practices – particularly continuous no-till – can save time and money compared to conventional tillage. The potential benefits of no-till are well-documented, from improving soil health to reducing annual fuel and labor investments.

Still, continuous no-till has been adopted across only 21 percent of all cultivated cropland acres in the United States. Why? One concern involves money saved compared to money spent. Can fuel and labor reductions really make up for the money invested in switching to a new farming practice?

To help farmers answer this question, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) conducted an annual fuel savings study comparing gallons of fuel used in conventional tillage practices to gallons used in conservation tillage practices like seasonal and continuous no-till. Just switching from continuous conventional till to seasonal no-till saves a little more than 3.2 gallons of fuel per acre. Across 1,000 acres, that equals roughly \$6,600 worth of fuel saved annually. [Read this article online.](#)

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](mailto:joe.trimnal@chathamcountync.gov). Our calendar fills up quickly during common planting seasons so reach out early if possible.



“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

Soil managed through no-till often has higher biological activity and more organic matter than soil that’s conventionally tilled. Photo credit: Ron Nichols, USDA-NRCS



## 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.

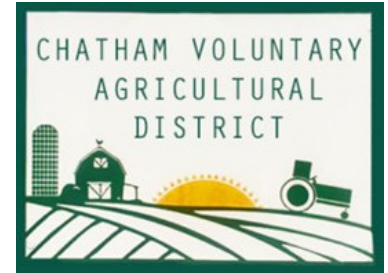
Signs identifying the VAD may be provided to qualifying farmland and placed on the property at the discretion of the owners (not within road right-of-ways).

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 managed 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) 545-8447. Residents may also [apply online](#).



# Education News



Students listen to a presentation on soils by licensed soil scientist Ryan Smith.

## 2024 Area Envirothon

### Planning for the 2024 Area 3

**Envirothon** is already getting started! We anticipate the 2024 Area 3 Envirothon to take place on March 12, 2024. Please check our [Area 3 Envirothon website](#) for the most current details.

For more information about forming an Envirothon team, volunteering to help with Envirothon, 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.

## 2023-2024 Conservation Contests are Here!

Our theme this year is “The Living Soil.” We’re especially excited about this year’s theme because soil is often taken for granted or underestimated. How many times do you hear the word “dirt”? Probably fairly often! Well, soil is not dirt and some of you may know where I’m going with this... Soil is alive! In most cases, there are more living things in a lump of healthy soil the size of your big toe than there are people on Earth right now... over 7 billion of them!

Students are encouraged to learn more about soil and use their creativity to tell others with a hand-drawn poster, essay, or a short verbal presentation! This is your opportunity to get creative and explore what our theme means to you. Our poster contest is open to students in grades 3-5. Our essay and public speaking contests are open to grades 6-12 with grades 9-12 being judged together. More details can be found on our [Conservation Contests webpage](#) or reach out to Brandy Oldham, Education Coordinator (919) 545-8440 or [brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov](mailto:brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov).

# Farmland Preservation

## Applications Now Open for Chatham County Agricultural Preservation & Development Trust Fund Grants

Applications for the Chatham Agricultural Preservation & Development (CAPD) Trust Fund are now open and will close at 5 pm on Monday, December 4. Application materials are available on the [District's Farmland Preservation webpage](#).

For the initial funding round, applications will be accepted for the following categories:

- Perpetual agricultural working-lands easements.
- Transaction costs related to or necessary to facilitate a working-lands easement.
- Organizational and programming support that promotes the preservation and development of working lands within Chatham County.

Applications for this pilot program round of CAPD grants will be accepted only from qualifying, nonprofit conservation entities, such as land trusts. Qualified entities must demonstrate a history and expertise in perpetual conservation easement transactions and stewardship. For this pilot program round, \$600,000 will be available for perpetual agricultural working-lands easements and transaction costs; \$75,000 is available for organizational and programming support grants.

Organizational and landowner inquiries about the CAPD grant process should be directed to Andrew Waters at [andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov](mailto:andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov) or 919-545-8447.

### 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

**October 25: Staff Training (Staff Out of Office)**  
**November 10: Veteran's Day (Office Closed)**  
**November 23: Thanksgiving (Office Closed)**  
**November 24: Thanksgiving (Office Closed)**  
**December: 25-27: Christmas (Office Closed)**  
**January 1, 2024: New Year's Day (Office Closed)**





# District News

## Chatham Soil & Water Welcomes New Farmland Preservation Coordinator

The Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District is excited to welcome our new Farmland Preservation Coordinator, Andrew Waters. The Chatham County Board of Commissioners have prioritized the protection and development of agriculture by establishing and funding the Chatham County Agriculture & Development Trust Fund. In his new role, Waters will be responsible for administering the trust fund and implementing other aspects of the Chatham Farmland Preservation Plan, which will be updated early in 2024.

This new position has been created at a pivotal moment in the county. A dedicated Farmland Preservation Coordinator will allow the Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District and Chatham County Cooperative Extension Service to develop robust farmland preservation initiatives including a permanent conservation easement program.

“The establishment of the Chatham County Agricultural & Development Trust Fund along with the update of the Chatham Farmland Preservation Plan is creating strong momentum for farmland preservation in Chatham County,” says Waters. “I’m excited to play a role in these critical initiatives and to become a part of the Chatham County community. Most of all I look forward to meeting the members of Chatham County’s agricultural community and learning how I can support them in their efforts to build a vibrant and resilient food system here that preserves the integrity of our farmland and other natural resources.”

Andrew is a land conservation professional with 20 years of experience working in natural resource conservation and farmland preservation. He is the former executive director of the Spartanburg Area Conservancy in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where he also served as the chair of the South Carolina Land Trust Network. Previously, he worked at the Catawba Lands Conservancy in Charlotte and the Three Rivers Land Trust in Salisbury, N.C.

If you and your family are curious about a voluntary farmland preservation easement on your property, please reach out to Andrew! (919) 545-8447 or [andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov](mailto:andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov).



**Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District's  
new Farmland Preservation Coordinator Andrew  
Waters.**

# Cost Share Programs

The Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District announces an opportunity to apply for cost share through the North Carolina Ag Cost Share Program (ACSP), Ag Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP), and Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP).

These are voluntary programs offering technical and financial assistance for installing Best Management Practices to address nonpoint source pollution.

## ACSP

Eligible applicants include owners and renters of agricultural operations who have a water quality issue on their farm and have been in business for three years. Cost share opportunities include the installation of Best Management Practices for waste management, stream protection, erosion management, or agricultural pollution prevention.



The pictured Best Management Practice, Livestock Trail Stabilization, means to provide a stable area used frequently and intensively for livestock movement by surfacing with suitable material to improve water quality. Benefits may include reduced soil erosion, sedimentation, and pollution from dissolved, particulate, and sediment-attached substances. Before stabilization (left) and after (right).

## AgWRAP

Eligible applicants include owners and renters of agricultural operations who need to increase their water use efficiency, availability and/or storage through Best Management Practices such as a well, an irrigation pond, or converting to a micro-irrigation system.

## CCAP

This program helps urban, suburban, and rural landowners install water quality improvement practices on their non-agricultural land. This funding is available to businesses, schools, churches, homeowners, parks, municipalities, or community groups for the installation of Best Management Practices for waste management, stream protection, or erosion management.

Applications are currently being accepted for these programs. All applications received will be evaluated and ranked according to District priorities with concern to water quality or quantity.

To apply for technical and financial assistance for the installation of Best Management Practices, individuals may contact Joe Trimnal, Soil Conservation Specialist, at (919) 545-8353 or by email: [joe.trimnal@chathamcountync.gov](mailto:joe.trimnal@chathamcountync.gov).

## 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  
Henry Outz, Associate Supervisor

## District Staff:

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

## NRCS Staff:

Vacant, NRCS Soil Conservationist Technician  
Olivia Plant, NRCS Supervisory Soil Conservationist

**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](http://www.chathamcountync.gov/swcd)

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

## Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District

1192 US 64 W Business, Suite 200  
Pittsboro, NC 27312

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