

AgWRAP Highlight | Ag Water Supply/Reuse Pond

What is the purpose of the program?

The purposes of the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP) is to:

- Implement best management practices (BMPs) to conserve and protect water resources
- Increase water use efficiency
- Increase water storage and availability for agricultural purposes

The pond below was designed to provide a more reliable water source for a crop irrigation system. Benefits may include increased water supply, erosion control, flood control, and sediment and nutrient reductions from farm fields.

Who is Eligible?

If you are a owner or operator of an existing agricultural operation that has been operating for more than one year and need more water for your operation, you are eligible to apply. Approved applicants may be reimbursed up to 75 percent of a predetermined average cost or actual cost up to a cost cap for each BMP installed.

How does AgWRAP work?

Applications are ranked regionally. Please contact Joe Trimnal at (919) 545-8353 for more information or to apply joe.trimnal@chathamcountync.gov.

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Completed Irrigation Pond

No-Till Drill Rentals

6 Tips for Switching to No-Till

An excerpt from the [article](#) by Neil Sass, NRCS

No-till is one of the most popular and effective conservation practices but making the switch from tilling to not can be intimidating. No-till allows farmers to grow crops with minimal disturbance to their fields and the organisms that live in the soil. This increases soil health while also reducing the cost of fuel and labor. Today, Neil Sass provides us with some tips for transitioning to no-till that he has learned from farmers who've been there.

These are the things farmers and other experts doing no-till have told me are necessary for success. Further details can be found online through the article link above.

1. Start planning at least 1 year before implementation
2. Pick an easy entry point and crop
3. Select the right seeds
4. Set up your planter correctly
5. Plant according to soil conditions, not the calendar
6. Seek advice and recommendations from successful no-tillers

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. Call early to reserve your spot on the calendar!



Haybuster 77C No-till Seed Drill

“Productive soil is life, and productive soil is vanishing with each passing year.”

-Hugh Hammond Bennett

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.

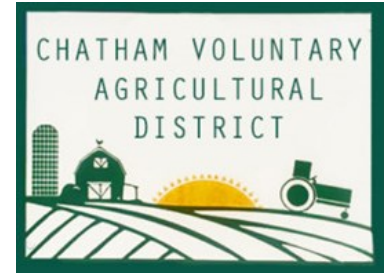
Signs identifying the VAD may be provided to qualifying farmland and placed on the property at the discretion of the owners (not within road right-of-ways).

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. The program encourages 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

Resource Conservation Workshop

The Resource Conservation Workshop is a weeklong workshop that involves study and hands-on participation in a wide range of conservation topics. Students are housed at NC State University campus dormitories under the guidance of live-in counselors. Awards and scholarships can be won and are presented to students under several programs.



Resource Conservation Workshop 2022

The Resource Conservation Workshop is scheduled for June 16 – June 21, 2024. Eligible students

include rising sophomore, junior, and senior high school students who have demonstrated an interest in natural resource conservation. High school graduates are not eligible to attend. Students may participate only once in this workshop.

Applications can be found online (<https://www.ncagr.gov/soil-water/swcaw-application/download?attachment>) or by contacting Brandy Oldham, Education Coordinator, at (919) 545-8440 or brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov. Applications must be submitted to Ms. Oldham no later than March 22, 2024. Applications should be mailed to 1192 US 64 W Business, Suite 200, Pittsboro, NC 27312. Those who are able to attach all required information may submit their applications via email.

2024 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 Area 3 Envirothon will be held on March 12th at Alamance Community College. Chatham County has 1 middle school team this year. The NC Envirothon will be held April 26th and 27th 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.

Chatham County Creek Week | March 13-23, 2024

Chatham County is excited to partner with the Clean Water Education Partnership (CWEP) to host the fourth annual Regional Creek Week to engage the public on the importance of clean and healthy waterways.

Join us in celebrating and protecting our waterways this Creek Week!

Creek Geeks Field Day

When: March 16th, 2024, Noon – 3 pm
(Rain date March 17th from Noon – 3 pm)

Where: Bray Park (Loves Creek Greenway),
800 Alston Bridge Rd. Siler City, NC 27344

What: Creek Geeks Field Day is a free, family friendly annual event that provides an opportunity for the community to explore their local watershed. Join us for an

afternoon on the Loves Creek Greenway. Attendees are invited to help assess the health of the creek by searching for aquatic insects such as mayflies, nymphs, and dragonflies larvae, and learn about the natural history of this loved waterway in a fun, hands-on way. Please wear comfortable shoes for walking (the site is approximately 1 mile down the greenway) and clothing that can get wet. No registration required. Please contact Brandy Oldham with questions: brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov.



Getting to the Point: A Demonstration on Water Pollution Sources

When: Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 10am – Noon

Where: Haw River Access Point, 4511 US Hwy 15/501 N, Pittsboro, NC

What: Join Staff from the Chatham County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Chatham County Solid Waste & Recycling at the Haw River Access Point off 15/501 for a hands-on demonstration of water pollution

sources and their effects on the watershed. They will also provide information on how you can help prevent water pollution in your own watershed. Please contact Brandy Oldham with questions : brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov.

Farmland Preservation

Farmland Preservation Consultations Available

Since starting work with Chatham County in August, Farmland Preservation Coordinator Andrew Waters has already met with several landowners who are interested in conserving their farms and working landscapes. “I’ve been very impressed with the amount of Chatham County landowners who are taking a serious look at permanent preservation options for their working landscapes,” says Waters. However, permanent farmland preservation requires a lot of education and planning. Waters says one of his most important jobs is to help educate landowners about conservation options and guide them through the process. “I’m here to be a resource for farmers and working-land owners who are interested in this option and want to learn more,” says Waters.

Contact Andrew Waters for a consultation on preservation options for your farm. There is no cost for this consultation, nor will there be any obligation or expectations for participation. He can be reached at 919-542-8267 or andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov.

District News

Spring Ag Fest 2024

Chatham County will host the 4th annual Spring Ag Fest at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center (CCACC) 1192 US 64 W Business, Pittsboro, NC, on Saturday, March 23rd, from 10 am to 3 pm. The 2024 Spring Ag Fest is a celebration of Chatham County’s agriculture, forestry, and natural resources. Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/2bxskurd>.

If you would like to be considered to participate in this annual event as a vendor/exhibitor, please complete the exhibitor/vendor application by clicking the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/4k65sx9a>.



Allison Sturgill's oxen team at the 2023 Ag Fest. Photo by Debbie Roos

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 12: Area 3 Envirothon (Staff Out of Office)
- March 16: Creek Geeks Field Day
- March 19: Creek Week Event re: Pollution
- March 29: Good Friday (Office Closed)
- April 26-27: NC Envirothon (Staff Out of Office)
- May 27: Memorial 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
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:

Chad Locklear, NRCS Soil Conservationist Technician
Olivia Plant, 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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