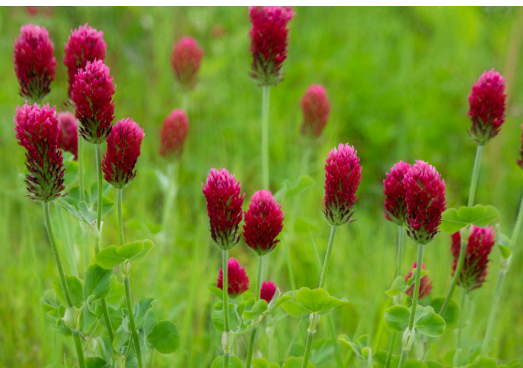


Loam on the Range

Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District's Quarterly Newsletter

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Chatham County Forever Farms Workshop

The Chatham County Farmland Preservation Program is offering a farmland transition and estate planning workshop on Thursday, June 20, from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Chatham County Agricultural and Conference Center at 1192 US Hwy 64 W Business, Pittsboro, NC 27312. The workshop is free but registration is required. To register, please visit or <https://forms.office.com/r/5ZedreyZjv>. Or register by contacting Farmland Preservation Coordinator Andrew Waters at (919) 545-8447 or andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov.

According to the American Farmland Trust, 40 percent of America's agricultural land will transition to new ownership in the next 15 years. Without intentional farmland estate and transition planning, future generations may soon find themselves in an agricultural land access crisis. "Farmland transition and estate planning is one of the most important steps you can take to preserve your farm for your heirs and future generations," said Waters.

A legal, updated will is the cornerstone of a great farmland transition and estate plan. However, planning should also include other agreements between landowners, their heirs, and their tenants about how the farmland and other real estate assets will be apportioned after they are deceased. Establishing a framework for these decisions is an important part of the farmland transition planning process. These decisions require knowing what can and cannot be done with property according to real estate law. A qualified attorney is essential for guiding property owners through this process.

The workshop will be presented by attorney Anna Cates Williams of Cedar Grove Law, a law firm focusing on agriculture, agribusiness, and agritourism. Williams's presentation will cover a variety of farmland transition planning topics, including wills and trusts, using LLCs and corporations, gifting real estate, estate tax considerations, and more. Her practice focuses on clients with estate planning and business succession needs.

Chatham County's Farmland Preservation Program is an initiative of the Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District in coordination with the Chatham County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Questions may be addressed to Andrew Waters at the contact information provided above.



Haybuster No-Till Drill

No-Till Drill Rentals

Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District has two, no-till seed drills available for rental. Please reach out to us for information on rentals and to make a reservation. As the planting season approaches, the calendars will fill up quickly. More information about our no-till drills can be found on our website, www.chathamcountync.gov/swcd.

Renting one of our no-till drills will cost a minimum of \$75, which is due up front. This fee will cover in-county residents for the first 7.5 acres. Additional acreage costs \$10 per acre. Renters will pay the balance upon returning the drill.

There are many benefits to using no-till drills including:

- reduced soil erosion by establishing living ground cover
- decreased soil disturbance, which means healthier soil adding even more benefits including:
 - increased water infiltration
 - conserves and improves organic matter
 - improved soil structure
 - promotes biological activity

If you are interested in renting one of our no-till drills, or learning more, please contact Joe Trimnal at (919) 545-8353 or joe.trimnal@chathamcountync.gov.

"Take care of the land and the land will take care of you..."
-Hugh H. Bennett



TruAx No-Till Drill



Fiscal Year 2024
158 acres planted using our no-till drills.

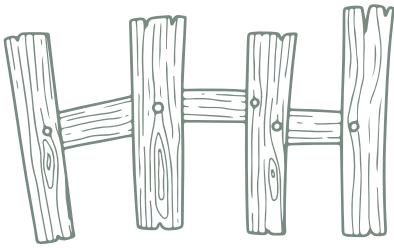




Over 446 distinct tax parcels are enrolled in the Voluntary Agricultural District Program as of May 2024.



18,000 acres enrolled as of May 2024.



According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, Chatham County has 1,076 farms with a average farm size of 106 acres.



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 may also apply online: <https://arcg.is/OTGCTv>.

The Voluntary Agricultural District Program is voluntary. Residents interested in finding out more are encouraged to contact Andrew Waters, Farmland Preservation Coordinator, by phone at (919) 545-8447 or by email andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov.





2024 Area 3 Envirothon

The Area 3 Envirothon was held at Alamance Community College on March 12, 2024. Chatham County had one participating middle school this year. The Chapel Hill Homeschoolers took 2nd place and competed at the NC Envirothon on April 26 & 27, 2024. If you would like to know more about starting an Envirothon team for next year's competition, please reach out to Brandy Oldham, (919) 545-8440.

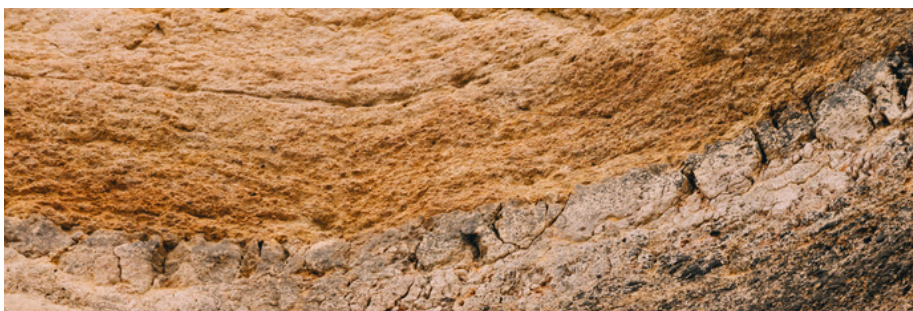
Education News

2024 NC Envirothon Results

The Chapel Hill Homeschoolers middle school team took 2nd place at the NC Envirothon on April 27th! Congratulations!

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. Chatham SWCD was able to sponsor two Chatham County high school students to attend this year.





Education News (Continued)

2024 Creek Geeks Field Day at Bray Park

During Regional Creek Week, Chatham County participated in several events over the course of March 16-23, 2024. Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District aligned our annual Creek Geeks Field Day with Regional Creek Week. This year we had 52 attendees on site to learn about water quality, pollution, and aquatic macroinvertebrates.

If you would like us to do a demonstration for your group, please reach out to Brandy Oldham at (919) 545-8440 or via email at brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov.

2023-2024 Conservation Contest Winners

This year we had 47 entries to our poster contest! Winning posters can be viewed on page 6.

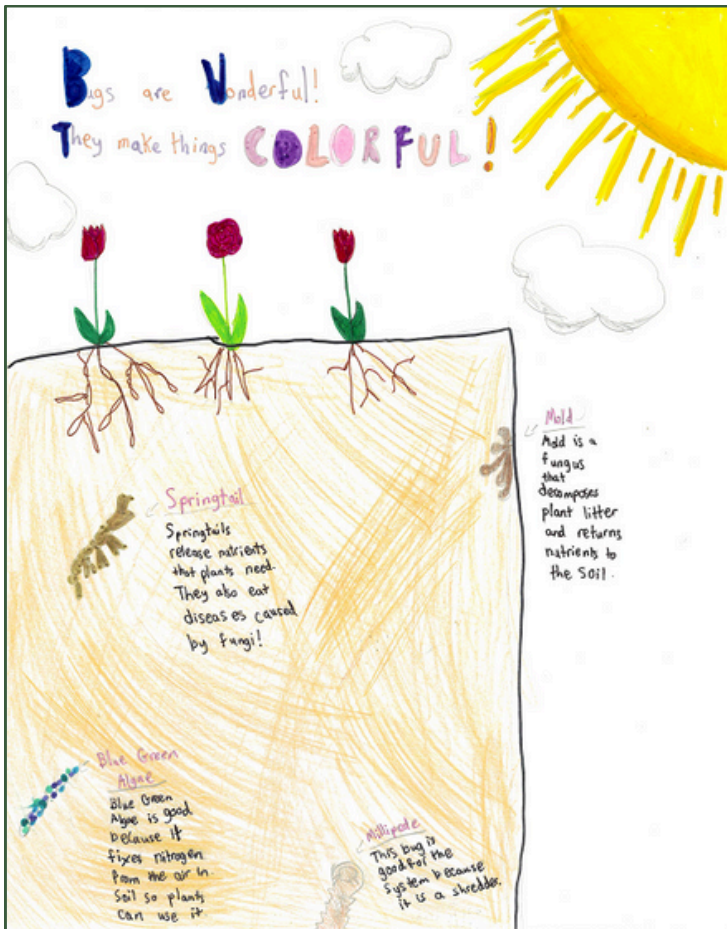
Our contest theme for 2024-2025 is "Wetlands are Wonderful!" Please reach out to Brandy Oldham at (919) 545-8440 or via email at brandy.oldham@chathamcountync.gov for more information.



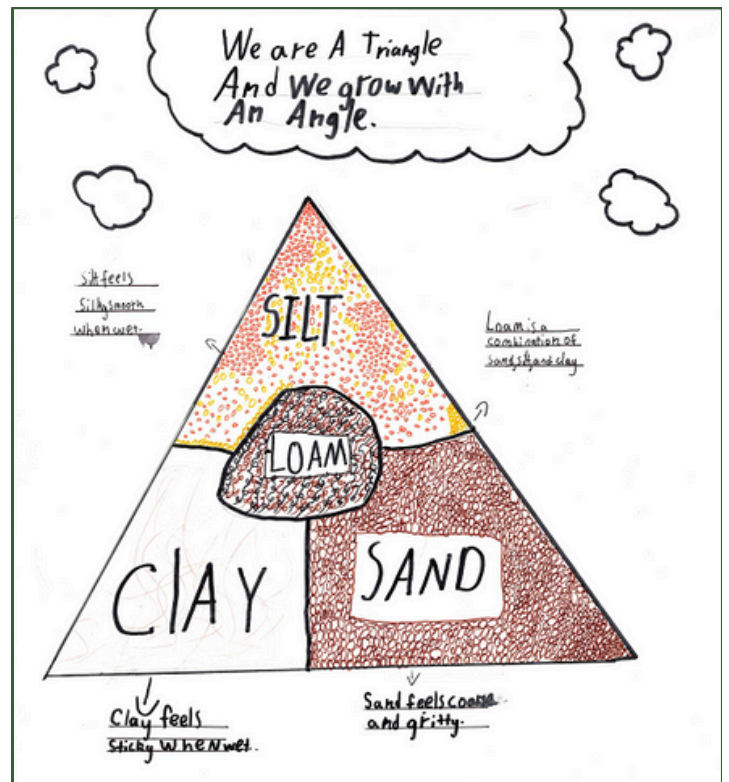
The Living Soil Poster Winners



Selah G.
1st Place - 3rd Grade



Elizabeth J.
1st Place - 5th Grade



Gracey F.
1st Place - 4th Grade





ACSP Highlight | Cover Crops

The North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program 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. Cover crops help with water infiltration, erosion control, increases organic matter, can potentially provide nutrients, and positively increase overall soil health.

Who is eligible?

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

How does ACSP work?

The Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District 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 Joe Trimnal at (919) 545-8353

Agriculture Cost Share Programs

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) 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.



District Supervisors:

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

Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District Mission Statement

To ensure the wise use of our natural resources; soil, water, air, plants, and animals by providing technical and educational services to land users.

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



Important Dates

June 19 - Juneteenth (Office Closed)
June 20 - Chatham Forever Farms Workshop
July 4 - Independence Day (Office Closed)
September 2 - Labor Day (Office Closed)
September 16-20 - Conservation Employee Training (Staff Out of Office)

In accordance with Federal Civil Rights law U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Civil Rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior credible activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).