

DAVIDSON

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Davidson County Agriculture Center - 301 East Center Street
Lexington, NC 27292
Telephone: (336) 242-2075

Published quarterly to provide information to the land users.

CONSERVATION Update

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Office Support IV

KAY ANDERSON
NRCS District Conservationist

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Fall 2015

We Have Moved! Davidson Soil and Water Conservation District has moved to a new location. We are now located at the end of the ramp between the Davidson County Agriculture Building and CVS Pharmacy. We are in the building that once housed the Parks and Recreation offices. Come visit us.

2015 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY

Pictured below: Donna, Abbey, Tristan, Rodney



Rodney and Donna Fulton were selected as the 2015 Conservation Farm Family for Davidson County. This award recognizes farmers and farm families who are taking the initiative to implement sound, innovative and cost-effective conservation techniques and are actively involved in conservation education. The Fulton's farm is considered a model. Their farm is located in the northern area of the County. They were chosen for their willingness to try new practices, their leadership within the farming community, and their progressive thinking for incorporating technology with their cattle and poultry operations. They have also installed many modern conservation practices and best management practices on the farm to address the natural resource concerns of the farm and to conserve and protect the soil and improve water quality. The farm is a member of the Davidson County Voluntary Agricultural District. The Fulton's are diligent in maintaining the overall appearance of the farm and their property. They maintain 60 head of cattle and about 80,000 chickens. Their conservation practices include critical area planting, livestock exclusion, heavy use area protection at livestock water tanks, water pipelines, 4 water tank units, water storage structure, and a mortality incinerator. They manage 50 acres of hay, and 80 acres of rangeland/pasture. The farm maintains a forest management plan on 30 acres of timber. Mrs. Fulton is an agricultural education teacher and has been an FFA Advisor since 1994, this has

allowed the farm to serve as an educational site for local high school agricultural education programs. The Fulton's have hosted cattle association field days and tours and served as a host work site for Agricultural Education Student Internships and Co-op work programs. The Fulton's have served as advisors with agriculture and livestock related student projects. Both Rodney and Donna are graduates of NC State University with Agricultural Degrees. They were honored at our Annual Awards Banquet in September and were applauded for their conservation activities, stewardship, community leadership, education practices and conservation knowledge. Congratulations to the Rodney and Donna for being the 2015 Conservation Farm Family and Thank You for helping protect our natural resources.

Resource Conservation Workshop - The Resource Conservation Workshop is held each summer on the Campus of NC State University in Raleigh. The event is a week of intensive study focusing on the management of natural resources and requires students' participation in a wide range of conservation activities. The Davidson District co-sponsored the workshop with the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission, NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the NC Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The District sponsored 3 students to attend the workshop on June 21st – June 26th. Sydney Singleton is a rising senior at the North Davidson High School, Samantha Ralph is also rising senior at Lexington High School and Joey Mitchell is a rising junior at Davidson Homeschool, all represented the District at the Workshop. They met with other students from across the state and the participants received guidance from natural resource professionals to win cash awards and scholarship money. Students learned about soil characteristics, soil conservation, wildlife, fisheries management, forest management, air quality, nonagricultural uses for soils, water quality and watershed management. The students and their parents were invited to our Annual Awards Banquet and reported on their experiences during the workshop.

*Samantha Ralph, Joey Mitchell and Sydney Singleton
with David Smith, Chairman*



2015 Agriculture and Conservation Farm Tour – Our Annual Conservation Farm Tour was held jointly with the Davidson Soil & Water Conservation District, the Cooperative Extension Service, and the USA-NRCS. Approximately 60 attendees traveled with us to farms within the County to view and learn about the latest agricultural innovations and farming practices within different areas on various soil and site conditions. It began at Ken Beck’s Farm to observe their livestock operation. The group traveled to Patriot Mart and the farmers market and fresh vegetables. Beautiful corn and soybean fields were observed at Tim Loflin and Ronald Thompson Farms. At Dennis Loflin Farm, the group observed his pig operation and best management practices they utilize. Vegetable production was viewed at Fine Farming. Lunch was served at The Classic Family Restaurant in Denton. After lunch, the group visited the Lexington Waste Water Treatment Plant to observe and learn about the ways they utilize best management practices within the city. Carolina Farm Credit and Davidson County Farm Bureau assisted with financial support to help make this tour possible.

Kent Beck’s Farm. Kent is standing by the barn and Mrs. Beck is holding the burro



Pictured left are Tim Loflin and Ronald Thompson’s Farm



Pictured to the right is an area of produce which includes tomatoes, potatoes, leafy vegetables, green beans and cantaloupe.



Michael Fine discusses his rich soil.



2015 Summer Environmental Science Camp - A week long day camp was held July 27th – 31st and was directed by Andy Miller, Director of Soil & Water Conservation. The camp is geared toward giving middle and high school students' hands-on experiences in natural resources conservation. The camp is designed to provide insight into a variety of environmental science issues and to develop in the students an appreciation of the world around them so that they may become good stewards. This is the 7th summer our camp has been offered. We had 25 students to participate this year. The camp incorporated numerous field trips, classroom presentations and activities with an emphasis on water, soils, forestry, and the environment. The students visited Finch Park for watershed identification, studied about long leaf pines and participated in ecosystem exploration at Weymouth Woods, toured Town Creek Indian Mound's Cultural Impacts, studied water quality, macro-invertebrates, and stream assessment and comparisons at Deep River, viewed best management practices at Red Acres Dairy Farm, and traveled to Mountain Island State Educational Forest where the students learned about forest management practices, tree identification and tree measurements. Students visited the Dig-It Secrets of the Soil Exhibit at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh. They also participated in stream walking activities. The camp also helps to prepare students for the Envirothon Competition.



Camp Group at Deep River



Camp Group studying macro-invertebrates

Southern Piedmont Envirothon

Teams are forming and beginning preparation work for the 2016 Envirothon. This event tests the knowledge and skills in the areas of aquatics, current environmental issues, forestry, soils and wildlife. The event is held among the 12 counties in the Southern Piedmont of North Carolina and is available to all 6th - 12th grade students from public, private and home schools. You are challenged to put together a team(s) to compete in a nationally recognized contest to see your students excel and be rewarded for their teamwork efforts. The 2016 Southern Piedmont Envirothon will be held at Catawba College Center for the Environment on March 8th for Middle School students, and March 9th for High School students. The winning teams from this area event will then progress to the State Envirothon Competition at Cedar Rock Park in Alamance County April 29th -30th, 2016. Please call our office at 336-242-2075 for additional information or for assistance in preparing your team. To learn more about the Envirothon please visit: <http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/educational/envirothon.html>

T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST

Another component of the Envirothon is a contest to design the t-shirt for the event. The winning design will be imprinted on all the t-shirts that will be given to all Envirothon participants. The winner will also receive a monetary award of \$50.00. The deadline for entering the t-shirt contest will be in January 2016.

For your info: Our office has an **Enviroscape** which is an interactive display used to demonstrate the effects of environmental issues and conditions on our natural resources. We would be glad to make a presentation for students using this tool. Call to schedule a time.

"We All Live In A Watershed" Conservation Poster & Essay Contest - Materials, contest rules and details were delivered to 6th Grade teachers to help them participate in the Poster & Essay Contests held during the months of October and November. Both contests are designed to supplement the instructions on natural resources as given in the classroom. The intent is to alert students to conservation principles and measures as they relate to each student's life. It is the hope that some of these principles will be absorbed, carried forth in life, and be used by the individual for the betterment of our community. District winners in both contests will be entered in the Area VIII Essay and Poster Contests. Area VIII is made up of 12 counties and the Area VIII winners will be entered in the NC State Competition. Teachers are invited to call our office at to schedule a presentation for your class or group of classes. Your cooperation in teaching our young people conservation and your willingness to participate in our Poster & Essay Contest is greatly appreciated.

No- Till Drill - Our Truax Flex II 88 no-till drill is available for rent for \$12.00 per acre. Operating the drill requires at least a 40 horsepower tractor with hydraulic capability. Seeding width is 5.3 feet with an overall transport width of approx. 8 feet. The drill is capable of planting small seeds (clover, legumes), fluffy seed (native warm season grasses), cool season grasses, small grain, and millet. Call or come by our office to schedule a time to use the drill.



Trivia

The oldest living tree on Earth is a 5,065 year-old Bristlecone Pine in Nevada.

Trees appeared on Earth long before the dinosaurs did – over 400 million years ago.

Trees are the largest of all living things, some species can grow taller than 300 feet and weigh more than 600 tons.

Some trees can live to be more than 1,000 years old.

There are 747 million acres of forest land in the United States – more than two-thirds of that land is privately owned.

It takes about 500 years to form topsoil and only one heavy rainfall to erode it away.

"The Nation that destroys its' soil destroys itself." Franklin D. Roosevelt

Agriculture & Conservation Assistance - Come by our office to sign up or receive information on the state and federal funded agricultural and conservation cost share programs available. NC Agriculture Cost Share Program for Water Quality, Community Conservation Assistance Program, Agriculture Water Resource Assistance Program, Cost-sharing available to close abandoned wells, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Program, NC Wetlands Restoration Program. Technical and funding assistance is provided by federal, state, and local government.

Best Management Practices - Many different conservation practices can be used on the farm or in urban areas to maintain healthy soils, prevent soil erosion, and managing our natural resources and water quality. Some of the most common BMP methods used are: conservation tillage, crop rotation, grassed waterways, ground cover, mulching and seeding, underground drainage, contour planting, terracing, strip cropping, windbreaks, field borders, silt fencing, lining ditches, sediment basins, and rock rip-rap. Recycle many organic wastes by spreading them on the land to add organic matter to the soil. When using hazardous chemicals, prevent soil and water pollution by reading the label and follow the manufacturer's instructions and precautions. Some hazardous chemicals can become tightly bonded with soil clay particles and remain there for years. This can contaminate food supplies, nearby crops, plants, other vegetation, and can be harmful to humans, animals, fish, and wildlife.

Test your soil now so you will know what it needs - Come by our office to pick up a soil test kit. Collect the soil samples, package them in the kit, and send it to Raleigh. From November through March, there will be a \$4.00 charge to cover the cost of soil analysis. We're always glad to help, if you have concerns regarding recommendations when the results are mailed to you or posted on the web, you may contact our office for interpretation and advice.

No-till Vegetable Gardening – Fall to Winter
It's October and the no-till cover crop has come up and is growing. Rye grain is the preferred cover crop as it is very winter hardy and will produce a lot of mulch. Wheat and barley work well, but do not produce as much.

WHAT HARMS THE SOIL - EROSION

Erosion is the wearing away of the earth's surface by wind or water. Erosion happens anywhere the soil is left unprotected. The Dust Bowl Era is the best example of how wind erosion can affect people. During the 1930's drought, harsh winds and poor farming practices led to one of the greatest natural disasters in our nation's history. Wind storms blew the topsoil off fields from the Midwest through Texas destroying crops and devastating farms. Eroded soils filled the skies, and in some places, from two inches to one foot of topsoil were lost. Most erosion today is caused by uncontrolled water runoff. Three types of erosion caused by water are sheet erosion, rill erosion, and gully erosion. Erosion begins with the first rain drop falling on bare unprotected soil, which loosens soil particles. When enough rain falls, runoff water carries soil particles away. We can protect the soil from wind or water erosion by using Best Management Practices which helps keep the soil productive and healthy. Good conservation practices protect our soils for the future.

~ Reminders ~

All programs and services provided by the Davidson Soil and Water Conservation District are available to you at no cost. Pick up an application in our office to become a member of the Voluntary Agriculture District. Thank you for your interest in soil, water, and natural resource conservation.

Public Notification Procedures – Current Non-Discrimination Statement – The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TDD).

For more information about anything in this newsletter, call us at 336-242-2075 or check us out on the Web: www.co.davidson.nc.us

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