



# Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District



**Working for clean streams  
and protected natural resources  
in Fairfax County**

*[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd)*

# We Provide...



## Who We Are

The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD) is a self-governing subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia whose boundaries are the same as those of Fairfax County. One of 47 conservation districts within Virginia, NVSWCD offers environmental leadership, technical assistance and environmental education to Fairfax County citizens, industry and local government with the goal of reducing the impact of urban and suburban activities on Fairfax County's water and land resources—vital components of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

# Soils Information

Landowners, realtors, developers, and others can get information about the properties of soils in Fairfax County. The District is overseeing the completion and update of Fairfax County's soil survey. The new soil survey will be published electronically, increasing public access to it.

# Conservation Planning

Agricultural landowners in Fairfax County can receive assistance in planning and implementing best management practices to meet the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance. Conservation planning assistance is available for all lands in agricultural use, including Agricultural and Forestal Districts, small farms, and suburban horse operations. The District administers the Virginia agricultural cost-share and tax credit programs for landowners who implement approved best management practices in Fairfax County.

# Technical Information

Staff provides information to homeowners, community associations, and industry to help solve problems pertaining to soil erosion, surface water drainage, pond management, stream restoration and stormwater infrastructure. On-site visits are made on a limited basis.



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# Stream Restoration

Residents, community groups, developers, and county officials get advice on stream restoration and enhancement. NVSWCD's highly trained staff has designed and implemented several stream restoration projects in Fairfax County.

# Stormwater Management

District staff provide expertise in the area of innovative stormwater management including low impact development (LID). LID structures treat and hold polluted runoff at the source thereby protecting downstream resources. Together with local government and non-profits, the district has designed and implemented several innovative LID projects.

# Rain Gardens

A rain garden is a landscaped, man-made depression that can improve water quality. The district designs rain gardens to detain and filter polluted runoff.

# Plan Review

Staff review rezoning applications submitted to Fairfax County by developers and provide recommendations on each application for protecting natural resources. Staff also review the erosion and sediment control and stormwater management aspects of site development plans.



*Photo courtesy of Northern Virginia Regional Commission*

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# Erosion & Sediment Control

Staff assist county officials, agencies, developers, and land owners in controlling erosion and managing the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff, and provide erosion and sediment control information to all segments of the community. Staff also judge erosion and sediment controls on construction sites for Fairfax County's annual Land Conservation Awards program.

## Publications

*Conservation Currents*, the district's quarterly newsletter, covers timely conservation issues, water quality problems and solutions, NVSWCD activities, and land management tips for homeowners and communities. Publications available on the NVSWCD web site include *You and Your Land—A Homeowner's Guide for the Potomac River Watershed*; *Managing Suburban Horse Operations*; and the *Water Quality Stewardship Guide*.

## Storm Drain Education

The district administers Fairfax County's volunteer storm drain education program. Staff provide materials and project support to scout groups, civic associations, non-profits and individuals interested in labeling storm drains and educating others about non-point source pollution prevention.



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# Stream Monitoring

NVSWCD trains volunteers to assess ecological conditions in streams based on the absence/presence of benthic macroinvertebrates (aquatic insects). Volunteers also learn how to take chemical measurements such as nitrate/nitrite and turbidity. County and state officials use the data to assess the overall stream conditions and help determine watershed management initiatives.

# Watershed Education

Teachers, youth leaders, and interested residents receive training on how to demonstrate a watershed model that shows how we can lessen the impact of polluted runoff. District staff also visit fairs, classrooms and youth events with the watershed model.

# Watershed Groups

The district encourages the formation and expansion of community watershed “friends of” groups that raise public awareness about, and participation in, watershed issues by providing administrative, educational, and/or technical assistance.

# Watershed Events

Working with partner agencies, NVSWCD leads watershed walks around the county to provide adults and children an opportunity to enjoy nature and observe stream problems such as eroded banks and invasive



species first-hand. NVSWCD also partners with agencies and organizations on the adopt-a-stream program and stream clean-up activities.

## Seedlings

The district sells native tree and shrub seedlings annually for spring planting. The quantity and species vary from year to year, but the cost is always less than \$20. Order forms are available on the district web site from January through March for April seedling distribution.

## Youth Programs

The district recognizes outstanding conservation efforts by students, youth groups, and schools. It supports teams of high school students in Envirothon, a statewide natural resources competition. It sponsors students to attend a Youth Conservation Camp and nominates a Fairfax County high school student in an annual statewide scholarship competition. The District also serves as a judge at the Regional Science Fair, recognizing excellence in conservation-related projects.

## Internship Program

Volunteer interns study local environmental issues and help with NVSWCD educational and technical programs. High school and college students can get hands-on professional natural resources experience through the NVSWCD internship program.

## Board of Directors

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