

# Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District

## FY2017 Annual Plan of Work

(adopted by NVSWCD's Board of Directors on July 26, 2016)

The annual plan of work serves as a guide to the actions and initiatives of Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District staff to meet the goals and objectives of NVSWCD's four-year strategic plan, which was adopted by the Board of Directors on June 28, 2016. The Strategic Plan contains goals and objectives for carrying out NVSWCD's mission *to promote sustainable urban and suburban activities and stewardship to conserve our soil, water, air, plants, and animal resources in Fairfax County – vital components of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. We achieve this through effective leadership, technical assistance and outreach programs in partnership with government, industry, non-profit organizations, and the public.*

### 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan Elements

Goals	1 Provide Leadership in Natural Resource Conservation	2 Provide High Quality Technical Assistance	3 Increase Environmental Stewardship through Outreach and Education	4 Develop, Facilitate and Strengthen Partnerships	5 Ensure a Strong Organization to Meet Responsibilities and Goals
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborate with County on strengthening its policies, regulations and practices.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate, evaluate and promote innovative conservation techniques.</li> <li>3. Advocate for state and federal policies and legislation to introduce and encourage conservation practices in developing or developed areas.</li> <li>4. Promote public involvement in natural resource protection and restoration.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide technical assistance to the private sector.</li> <li>2. Provide technical assistance to government agencies.</li> <li>3. Provide technical assistance to traditional and non-traditional agricultural land users.</li> <li>4. Provide technical assistance to county residents and groups.</li> <li>5. Maintain soil science expertise and resources.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide, develop and evaluate effective public outreach.</li> <li>2. Provide, develop and evaluate adult conservation education programs.</li> <li>3. Provide, develop and evaluate strong youth and school education programs.</li> <li>4. Sponsor and promote award programs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foster an integrated approach with local and regional government agencies.</li> <li>2. Bring together diverse agencies, businesses, organizations, and individuals to implement conservation projects.</li> <li>3. Develop, facilitate and strengthen relationships with federal and state agencies.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seek reliable and adequate funding.</li> <li>2. Recruit and retain high quality staff.</li> <li>3. Recruit and engage associate directors, consultants and volunteers.</li> <li>4. Effectively manage District operations.</li> <li>5. Emphasize a results-based accountability system.</li> <li>6. Encourage, provide and facilitate employee and board development.</li> <li>7. Fully use technology to assist in program implementation.</li> <li>8. Celebrate District accomplishments.</li> </ol>

# Goal 1

## Provide Leadership in Natural Resource Conservation

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### **Collaborate with County on strengthening its policies, regulations, and practices.**

- Serve as an active member and participant in Fairfax County DPWES Stormwater Management Team, Environmental Coordinating Committee, Board of Supervisor's Environmental Committee, Fairfax County Tree Commission, Engineering Standards Review Committee, Environmental Quality Advisory Council, and Web Team.
- Participate in the update of Fairfax County's Environmental Vision, particularly as it relates to environmental stewardship.
- Work with Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, DPWES-Land Development Services, and other agencies to develop a local response and triage for agricultural-related complaints in Fairfax County.
- Review site plans for erosion and sediment control and stormwater best management practices.
- Review rezoning cases for erosion and sediment control and stormwater best management practices.

### **Demonstrate, evaluate, and promote innovative conservation techniques.**

- Engage relevant county staff and officials in NVSWCD-initiated forums on issues of common concern, including stream restoration and stormwater best management practices on private property.
- Implement and evaluate a cost-share assistance program to private property owners to implement or maintain low impact development and other stormwater best management practices on their properties.
- Conduct annual assessment of newly-inventoried and publicly-maintained bioretention and porous pavement facilities, in partnership with DPWES – Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division.
- Promote local, state, and national grant-based opportunities, including the Neighborhood Enhancement Partnership Program, to support the implementation of innovative natural resource conservation techniques on private and common areas.
- Provide leadership and technical expertise for emerging livestock-based interests and practices, such as, backyard chicken management, goat grazing, and sheep mowing operations in Fairfax County.
- Establish and promote training opportunities for County staff and industry on innovative stormwater management practices and stream stabilization and restoration practices.

**Advocate for state and federal policies and legislation to introduce and encourage innovative conservation practices in developing or developed areas.**

- Convene a Legislation Committee to prepare local legislative priorities.
- Participate in meetings or conference call for the development of the Area II Legislative Agenda.
- Review and comment on elements of the 2017 VASWCD Legislative Agenda that relate specifically to urban SWCDs.
- Promote the results of the assessment of publicly-maintained Low Impact Development Practices in Fairfax County, in partnership with DPWES – Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division.
- Host a field tour for legislators and local officials to showcase programs and on-the-ground practices.
- Coordinate correspondence with the Northern Virginia Caucus to share information on the programs and needs of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

**Promote public involvement in natural resource protection and restoration.**

- Host and coordinate speakers for six Green Breakfast forums.
- Coordinate and promote annual Sustainable Garden Tour in the Alexandria and South County area.
- Present in one Rain Garden workshop, in partnership with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and Arlington County government.
- Coordinate six Build-Your-Own Rain Barrel workshops and two Build-Your-Own Composter workshops.
- Distribute monthly *Watershed Calendar* to promote participation of Fairfax County residents in local, regional and national stewardship opportunities.
- Encourage the participation of residents in the Volunteer Stream Monitoring program.
- Update the County's on-line volunteer management system and use it as an additional means to advertise and recruit for all of the District's volunteer programs.
- Coordinate with DPWES-Stormwater Management Planning to target outreach to communities in priority watersheds and encourage their participation in the Conservation Assistance Programs.
- Promote and administer the Virginia Agricultural Cost-share program through NVSWCD's website and targeted outreach to potential applicants.

## GOAL 1

### Performance Measures

- Customer satisfaction.
- Number of citizen contacts.
- Number of participants at semi-annual community exchange events, including:
  - Green Breakfasts
  - Sustainable Garden Tour
- Distribution and installation rate of build-your-own rain barrels and composters.

# Goal 2

## Provide High Quality Technical Assistance

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### **Provide technical assistance to private industry.**

- Provide technical assistance to consultants and developers, upon request, on stream restoration projects, better site design, LID practices, soil and natural resource protection strategies, pulling examples from past and current NVSWCD practices when appropriate.
- Work with complementing agencies to develop agenda and criteria for training opportunities to industry representatives on the design, construction, and maintenance of BMPs.
- Support the establishment of Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional Certification (CBLP) program in partnership with the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council and others.

### **Provide technical assistance to government agencies.**

- Respond to requests from Fairfax County Park Authority, DPWES and DPZ to review of rezoning, special exception cases, and to support the remediation of code violations as they relate to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.
- Meet with project partners, including but not limited to DPWES-SWPD and FCPA to coordinate project schedules and to identify opportunities for cross-agency support. Consult and advise the county on related projects.
- Participate in the annual operation and maintenance inspection of the PL-566 dams.
- Serve as judges and co-sponsor of the 2016 Land Conservation Awards program.
- Support Fairfax County's Community Rating System by providing technical assistance to residents on flood-related concerns.

### **Provide technical assistance to traditional and non-traditional agricultural land users.**

- Prepare new or revise existing Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plans (SWQCP) and provide technical assistance with their implementation.
- Promote cost-share opportunities to identify and encourage the participation of eligible cooperators.
- Sponsor a seminar or workshop on an item of interest to Fairfax County's agricultural community, such as amenity pond management.

### **Provide technical assistance to county residents and groups.**

- Manage NVSWCD's online Drainage and Erosion Checklist and monitor usage for site and content enhancements.
- Integrate NVSWCD's Technical Assistance SharePoint database with ArcGIS to analyze data and coordinate with other county agencies that respond to stormwater, drainage and erosion-related complaints.
- Maintain reference material, including contact list, for response to telephone and email correspondence with county residents.
- Provide field visits for concerns that cannot be resolved via the telephone or through the use of the online Drainage and Erosion Checklist.
- Review and certify, when appropriate, Urban Nutrient Management Plans developed through the Home Turf program by Fairfax County Master Gardeners volunteers.

### **Maintain soil science expertise and resources.**

- Continue to manage the Soil Survey data and GIS information.
- Provide technical advice in regards to infiltration, soil health, and other related concerns.
- Explore intermediate alternatives to Soil Morphology class, with the Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists, to provide continuing education for eligible engineers in the identification of the high water table using morphological characteristics of soil.
- Conduct soil tests to determine properties of soils in fringe areas that require that require geotechnical reports.
- Work with DPWES to revise the county soil maps and prepare them for adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

## **GOAL 2**

### **Performance Measures**

- Number of technical assistance site visits.
- Number of acres/parcels benefitting from technical assistance.
- Treated acreage served by VCAP/CAP projects and certified Nutrient Management Plans.
- Number of parcels and acres of Resource Protection Area (RPA) protected by Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plans.
- Customer satisfaction with technical assistance provided.
- Value of flood insurance costs avoided by County residents as a result of NVSWCD assistance.

# Goal 3

## Increase Environmental Stewardship through Outreach and Education

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### **Provide, develop and evaluate effective public outreach.**

- Determine priority areas for directed public outreach.
- Review journal articles, participate in workshops and other related efforts to stay current on methods in which people receive and process information.
- Modify website content based on website analytics trends in visitation, popular pages, and desired content.
- Publish three issues of Conservation Currents featuring informative articles that highlight projects, local issues and technical topics.
- Provide presentations to homeowners, civic associations, watershed groups, governmental and other groups about NVSWCD, its programs, and local environmental issues of concern, particularly in areas along the Route 1 corridor.
- Develop forms to collect feedback at NVSWCD-sponsored events to evaluate their effectiveness.

### **Provide, develop and evaluate adult conservation education programs.**

- Provide hands-on workshops and trainings in building rain barrels, composters and rain gardens to engage adults in reducing impacts from nonpoint source pollution.
- Encourage community engagement and shared-learning by sponsoring the annual Sustainable Garden Tour, Volunteer Stream Monitoring opportunities and Storm Drain Marking projects.

### **Provide, develop and evaluate youth and school education programs.**

- Sponsor and promote the local Envirothon program.
- Promote, collect and review applications for local students to participate in the VASWCD-sponsored Scholarship and Youth Conservation Camp programs.
- Work with NoVA Outside and Get2Green to engage formal and informal educators in facilitating participation in stream monitoring, storm drain marking, schoolyard and community cleanups and outdoor classroom development.
- Participate as a member of the Fairfax County Public Schools Sustainability stakeholder group.
- Promote volunteer programs as a means of earning required service learning hours.
- Work with teachers and school administrators to develop programs and resources that assist them in meeting Standards of Learning.
- Assist local non-governmental organizations with their existing in-school environmental programs.

### **Sponsor and promote award programs.**

- Participate in the annual Land Conservation Awards program.
- Name and recognize an annual Cooperator of the Year.
- Name and recognize a Bay-Friendly Clean Water Farm.
- Nominate NVSWCD programs and projects for awards and recognition.
- Nominate NVSWCD directors, associates, staff, partners and colleagues for awards.
- Provide judges for the Fairfax County Regional Science Fair, in partnership with Fairfax Master Naturalists.

### **GOAL 3**

#### **Performance Measures**

- Number of volunteers involved in activities, supported by NVSWCD.
- Percent of activities in NVSWCD's defined targeted areas that receive an adult or youth education program, sponsored by or in partnership with NVSWCD.
- Number of participants at events.
- Percentage of county storm drains marked during reporting period.
- Number of households educated through the storm drain education program.

# Goal 4

## Develop, Facilitate and Strengthen Partnerships

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### **Foster an integrated approach with local and regional government agencies.**

- Manage a working group to discuss the feasibility and implementation of a homeowner's incentive or urban cost-share program for the establishment of BMPs on private property.
- Meet with local agency representatives to discuss opportunities for collaboration on common interests and goals.
- Support the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District.

### **Bring together diverse agencies, businesses, organizations, and individuals to implement conservation projects.**

- Provide administrative support to the Potomac Council and Potomac Watershed Roundtable.
- Support the Northern Virginia Regional Commission on several ongoing efforts, including rain garden workshops, regional native plant campaign, Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners, technical trainings and workshops, and outreach and training to the landscaping community.
- Coordinate with non-profits, including Wetlands Watch, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, Chesapeake Stormwater Network, Fairfax ReLeaf and others on issues of common concern.
- Facilitate stream cleanups in Fairfax County affiliated with the Alice Ferguson Foundation and Clean Virginia Waterways.

### **Develop, facilitate and strengthen relationships with federal and state agencies.**

- Continue to provide technical expertise and support to the Bureau of Land Management in the maintenance of the Mason Neck Gateway Kiosk bioretention facility, along Gunston Road in Lorton.
- Support the Bureau of Land Management's environmental education programs at Meadowood.
- Support and participate in VASWCD and NACD-sponsored events, such as VASWCD's Urban Committee, IT Committee, VCAP Subcommittee, Forestry Committee, and NACD's Urban and Community Conservation Webinars, among others.

## GOAL 4

### Performance Measures

- Number of on-the-ground projects facilitated through partnerships.
- Acres treated by partnership projects.
- Tax dollars saved as a result of NVSWCD assistance.

# Goal 5

## Ensure a Strong Organization to Meet Responsibilities and Goals

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### **Seek reliable and adequate funding.**

- Prepare and submit FY2018 Budget requests to Fairfax County and FY2018 Budget template to DCR.
- Meet DCR grant deliverables.
- Provide semi-annual contributory reports to Fairfax County.
- Earn income from Seedling Sale.
- Explore the possibility of selling rain barrel and composter kits at the Seedling Sale.
- Encourage VASWCD to support adequate state funding for all workloads, through the 2016 Legislative Agenda.
- Pursue grants to provide non-recurring support for NVSWCD programs.

### **Recruit and retain high quality staff.**

- Evaluate NVSWCD's retirement benefits package.
- Implement professional development plans for each employee.
- Document procedure for cost of living and performance based salary adjustments.

### **Recruit and engage associate directors, consultants and volunteers.**

- Host semi-annual meetings of NVSWCD's financial committee.
- Host a work session on the development of Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plans.
- Encourage the participation of directors, associates and other to represent NVSWCD at ribbon-cutting and dedication events.
- Invite associates and others to participate in the preparation of NVSWCD's 2017 Legislative Agenda and to attend the 2017 Legislative Day in January 2017.
- Encourage and recruit volunteers to participate and assist with District programs.
- Maintain a robust and meaningful intern program to support ongoing efforts.

### **Effectively manage operations.**

- Prepare and present a mid-year status and financial report to the Board on the efforts made by NVSWCD staff during the first half of FY2017.
- Establish records management strategy and retention schedule.

- Ensure integrity of NVSWCD’s financial processes and controls and make adjustments where appropriate to align with the Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations.
- Review and modify NVSWCD’s policies and procedures, at least annually.

**Emphasize a results-based accountability system.**

- Collect feedback from participants in NVSWCD-sponsored programs, workshops and events.
- Conduct dialogues with partners at the end of efforts to promote successes and lessons-learned.
- Provide mid-year and end-of-year reports on activities and performance measures.

**Encourage, provide and facilitate employee and board development.**

- Sponsor employee attendance at seminars, workshops, trainings, conferences and meetings, including those coordinated by the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council, Fairfax County Government, Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees, VASWCD, DCR, NACD and others.
- Identify opportunities for strengthening staff knowledge, skills, abilities and certifications to meet emerging needs and issues.
- Sponsor director attendance at seminars, workshops, trainings, conferences and meetings, including those coordinated by VASWCD, DCR, NACD and others.
- Prepare and share performance expectations for NVSWCD staff through annual evaluations.

**Fully use technology to assist in program implementation.**

- Evaluate NVSWCD’s participation in Fairfax County’s Computer Replacement Program.
- Manage Green Breakfast, Watershed Calendar, and Conservation Currents e-newsletter in Constant Contact.
- Pilot the use of ArcGIS online and SharePoint for in-field data collection during homeowner inquiries.
- Maintain an active presence on social media, including Twitter, Pinterest, and Facebook.

**Celebrate District accomplishments.**

- Publish and distribute annual report for FY2016; prepare report materials for FY2017.
- Sponsor and participate in technical trainings, committees, projects and events.
- Purchase promotional items for distribution and apparel for staff and directors.
- Identify opportunities to publicize and recognize efforts such as the Conservation Assistance Program pilot sites, Rain Barrel Workshops, Seedling Sale and Storm Drain Marking Program.

## GOAL 5

### Performance Measures

- Number of website page views.
- Number of likes and followers on NVSWCD social media.
- Total volunteer hours.
- Employee satisfaction.
- Score of DCR evaluations for Admin-Ops and Cost-share grant agreements.