



FY 2016 Annual Report



Engaged Communities Working Together to Protect and Restore Natural Resources

CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE

With continued funding from Fairfax County, NVSWCD provided technical and financial incentives to implement energy and water conservation projects. Communities installed projects including low-E windows, porous paver pathways, and conservation landscaping.

SOIL MORPHOLOGY

A soil morphology course targeting Professional Engineers (PEs) included classroom and field training to determine the depth to the seasonal high water table. Nearly sixty engineers, soil scientists and others participated in this partnership with Virginia Tech and Virginia Association of Soil Scientists.

LEGISLATIVE DAY

NVSWCD directors met with legislators in Richmond during the annual soil and water conservation district legislative day in January.

POLLINATOR MEADOW

Over sixty volunteers helped transform an acre of turfgrass at the Fairfax County Government Center over the course of two planting days in mid-May. Altogether, 2000 native plants from local nursery Earth Sangha will provide habitat for pollinators as they flourish in their new home.

It doesn't take much to awaken someone's inner natural resource steward. This spirit often lies dormant during the busy seasons of our lives in Fairfax County and emerges when encouraged by engaging programs, hands-on activities, and shared learning opportunities. Fortunately, we do not need to wait long or go far to participate in these programs. As an advisory body, NVSWCD aims to share the best available information with our local and state government partners, Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners, community associations, businesses, non-profit organizations, and individual residents. They in turn can make their own informed decisions on how they manage the natural resources entrusted to their care. We are in this together and can all relish in the fluttering wings of pollinators that visit our native gardens, the cleaner water flowing through our streams, and the whispering winds blowing throughout our urban forests. Thank you for being a committed steward – we look forward to continuing our partnership.

Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District

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USDA-NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST

Roger Flint

About the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) were established in the 1930s to develop comprehensive programs and plans to conserve soil resources, control and prevent soil erosion, prevent floods and conserve, develop, utilize and dispose of water.

Founded in 1945 by citizens concerned about conserving natural resources, the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District is now one of 47 conservation districts in Virginia and approximately 3,000 nationwide. NVSWCD is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, governed by a five-member Board of Directors. Its boundaries are the same as those of Fairfax County, home to over 1.1 million people.

NVSWCD is a locally-led conservation agency with a long history of responding to Fairfax County's changing rural to urban landscape, transitioning programs based on identified needs. NVSWCD is valued for its leadership in using new and emerging techniques to address traditional issues and current challenges.

NVSWCD is not a regulatory agency. Instead, it serves the residents of Fairfax County directly and through partners to provide conservation information, technical services, educational programs and volunteer opportunities to residents on many aspects of water quality, nonpoint source pollution and ecological health and connects residents with environmental initiatives and opportunities.

Our Vision is engaged communities working together to protect and restore natural resources.

Our Mission is 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.

The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District receives financial support and administrative assistance provided by Fairfax County, the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

OUR REACH:

14,077: PROGRAMS & PRESENTATIONS

209 Rain Barrel Workshop Participants (264 Barrels)
 488 Seedling Sale Participants planted 7,310 native shrubs, trees
 18 Composter Workshop Participants
 50 at Rain Garden Workshops
 45 Envirothon High School Students, Coaches and Volunteers
 773 Stream Monitor Volunteers and Participants (24 Site Leads)
 542 Storm Drain Volunteers (1,973 storm drains labeled)
 6,199 Households reached in storm drain neighborhoods
 21 Conservation Assistance Program community applicants
 200+ at Sustainable Garden Tour
 55 at Green Breakfasts (6x/year)
 1,787 Watershed Cleanup Volunteers
 1,020 at Enviroscope (36 presentations)
 1,299 at Presentations & Seminars
 110 Visitors at Outreach Events
 3 Youth Conservation Campers
 7 Science Fair Awardees
 47 Poster Contest Submissions
 664 Inquiries Resolved
 50 Potomac Watershed Roundtable Attendees (4x/year)
 30 Land Conservation Award Recipients
 5 VASWCD Scholarship Applicants, 1 NVSWCD awardee (\$1000)
 1 Clean Water Farm
 1 Cooperator of the Year

453: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Pond Inquiries & Visits 19
 Soils Inquiries..... 129
 Site Visits..... 160
 Site Plans Reviewed for E&S and SWM..... 19
 Rezoning/Special Exceptions Reviewed..... 110
 Agricultural Plans 16
 Acreage..... 559
 RPA Protected (linear ft)..... 28,584

229,325: WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER

2,519 Newsletter Recipients (print + electronic)
 1,458 Watershed Calendar Recipients
 728 Green Breakfast Email Recipients
 224,364 Unique Website Visitors (400,402 Pageviews)
 145 Twitter Followers
 113 Facebook Followers

5,739 VOLUNTEER HOURS

1,399 Hours of Stream Monitoring
 2,680 Hours of Trash Pickups
 1,306 Hours of Storm Drain Labeling
 64 Hours of Garden Tour Hosting
 253 Hours of Volunteer Interning
 37 Hours of Rain Barrel Support

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Facilitating Hands-On Conservation

- Worked with 21 community associations to provide technical and financial assistance through the **Virginia Conservation Assistance Program**. Prepared to launch program expansion to places of worship and homeowners.
- Distributed over 7,310 tree and shrub seedlings to over 480 Northern Virginia residents during the annual **Seedling Sale**. The selection included Eastern Redbud, Persimmon, American Hornbeam, Red Chokeberry, Hazelnut, Bayberry, White Dogwood, and Indigobush with a “Back by Popular Demand” theme.
- Attracted over 200 participants for **Rain Barrel Workshops**. Featured an Artistic Rain Barrel painted by a local artist to raise awareness of personal environmental stewardship. **PICTURED →**
- Marked 1,973 **storm drains** with 542 volunteers who logged 1,306 hours over 23 projects. These efforts resulted in the education of approximately 6,199 households.
- Engaged over 770 volunteers and students in our hands-on **biological stream monitoring** program, learning about how benthic macroinvertebrates (stream bugs) are used to assess stream health.
- Facilitated fall and spring **cleanups** with the Alice Ferguson Foundation and Clean Virginia Waterways. Nearly 1,800 residents helped pick up trash at stream and river cleanups in Fairfax County in FY 2016.



Providing Technical Expertise

- Provided **Nutrient Management Planning** expertise in the development of five agricultural plans for 321 acres. Supported **Home Turf** homeowner nutrient management program and Resource Protection Area stream buffer delineation in a partnership with Virginia Cooperative Extension.
- Led an in-depth **Pasture Management Seminar** with the Great Falls Saddlery, attracting over 20 horse operation owners and managers. Developed 16 **Soil and Water Quality Conservation Plans** for Chesapeake Bay protection on agricultural lands spanning 559 acres and including 28,584 linear feet of stream buffer protection.
- Reviewed initial designs and served as an on-site supervisory consultant in the **Franklin Park-Chesterbrook Neighborhood Stormwater Improvement Project** for Fairfax County DPWES-Stormwater Planning.
- Participated as a member of **technical advisory committees** for the **Virginia Conservation Assistance Program**, implemented in thirty soil and water conservation districts, and the development of the **Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional** certification related to best management practice design, construction, monitoring and inspection.
- Held **Soil Morphology Course** for Professional Engineers (see front cover for photo and description).
- Assessed the performance of publicly-maintained **bioretention facilities**, in partnership with Fairfax County DPWES-Maintenance and Stormwater Management.
- Strengthened **tracking** of residential technical assistance requests and visits.

Developing Young Environmental Leaders

- Nominated Katrina White, a recent graduate from James Madison High School, for a **scholarship award** provided by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Educational Foundation. Katrina won the \$1,000 scholarship, which will help support her as she studies Environmental Engineering at Yale University. **PICTURED →**
- Supported six teams participating in this year's **Envirothon Competition**: Hidden Pond Nature Center, Langley High School, Fairfax High School (2 teams), Thomas Jefferson High School, George Marshall High School, and James Madison High School. Hidden Pond and Thomas Jefferson advanced to the regional competition held at Bull Run Regional Park. Jefferson took third place at regionals and fourth place overall at the statewide competition in Harrisonburg in May 2016.
- Sent three Fairfax County high school students to **Youth Conservation Camp**, a week of natural resources career exploration held at Virginia Tech in July 2015.
- Awarded prizes to **Regional Science Fair** projects conducted by seven students that exemplify thoughtful research and science on issues related to stormwater management, water quality, environmental health and soil and water conservation: *The Effects of Fertilization and Recycling on Water Quality*, *Effect of Fertilizer on Duckweed Growth*, *Effect of Soil Moisture Content on Topsoil Erosion*, *Effect of Road Salts on Pea Plants*.



Connecting Our Conservation Community

- Brought together 8 hosts, over a dozen volunteers and nearly 200 visitors to the **2016 Sustainable Garden Tour**, featuring rain gardens, native plants, and more in the Reston-Herndon area.
- **Green Breakfast** topics featured: Pollinator Meadow Planting and Celebration at the Fairfax County Government Center, Managing Climate Change Risks in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area: Adaptation Through NASA's Telescope, Fungi and Environmental Remediation, Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center (PEREC), What Weeds Can Tell You About Lawn Health, A Celebration of NVSWCD's First 70 Years
- Emailed monthly **Watershed Calendar** of engagement opportunities across Fairfax County to over 1,300 recipients.

FY 2016 Awardees

- Gave **Land Conservation Awards** to 30 recipients with Fairfax County DPWES in January 2016. The program recognizes projects that exemplify the use and management of erosion and sediment controls during the site development process. Sites are nominated and evaluated throughout the year.
- The 2016 Diane Hoffman **Cooperator of the Year** Award honored Brion's Grille for their partnership on the Green Breakfast program for over a decade.
- The 2016 Fairfax County **Clean Water Farm** Award honored Potomac Vegetable Farms for their innovative conservation practices and cooperation of their small livestock and vegetable operation in Vienna, VA.