



We work with the people who work the land.

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

ALLEGHANY COUNTY, BATH COUNTY, HIGHLAND COUNTY,
and the CITY OF COVINGTON July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022

MOUNTAIN SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
65 Courthouse Hill Rd.
P.O. Box 310, Warm Springs, Virginia 24484
540-839-4616 or 1-800-254-3854

The Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District, a legal subdivision within the state of Virginia, is charged with conserving the soil and water resources of Highland, Bath, and Alleghany Counties, and the City of Covington. The District works closely with the following agencies in order to help farmers, other landowners and land managers, businesses, and local units of government in the wise management and protection of their natural resources.

U.S. Government

National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)-Technical Assistance and Planning in conservation, Soil surveys

Forest Service-Management of National Forests and related Environmental Issues

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Cost Sharing for conservation practices

STATE OF VIRGINIA

Virginia Division of Soil & Water Conservation-The Administrative Agency for Conservation Districts provides guidance for employees, Erosion and Sediment Control, Conservation Tax Credits, and Nutrient Management Planning

Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources-Wildlife Conservation, Planting materials and Fish Stock

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service- Education and information

Virginia Department of Forestry- Management of privately owned forests and related environmental issues

Chesapeake Bay Foundation- Working across Middle & Upper James Watersheds to improve quality of local water ways.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)-Environmental management and regulations

The District is governed by a Board of Directors, who serve without salary and are elected by the voters of the District. Two Directors are elected from each county unit. Berkley Cassidy, Extension Agent, Bath/HighlandCounty, is appointed by the Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board for a 4-yr. term.

Ellen Ford, Bath County, is also appointed by the Board to serve as a Director-At-Large for a 4-yr. term.

The composition of the Board as of January 1, 2021 is as follows:

- Chair** Ellen Ford
Bath County
- Vice Chair** Terry King
Asso. Director Bath County
- Secretary** Dave Peters
Asso. Director Bath County
- Treasurer** L. Ryan Hodges III
Bath County

MEMBERS:

- Allen Dressler
- Robert Short, Sr.
- City of Covington**
- Rodney P. Leech
- Ari Daniels
- Highland County**
- Christine Hodges
- John Quantz, Sr.
- Alleghany County**
- Berkeley Clark Cassidy
- Ext. Agent Appt.

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the **Department of Conservation and Recreation. (DCR)** Also, with the help of local funds, and self-generated funds from the equipment program, the District employs Lorie Baldwin, Office Administrator; Sue Ailstock, part-time BMP Coordinator; and Chris Swecker, Conservation Specialist.

All of the District's programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, regardless of age, color, race, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, marital or familial status, or any other basis protected by law.

The Mountain Soil & Water District meets the third Wednesday of every month at 9:00 a.m. The meeting is open to the public.



MOUNTAIN SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT STAFF
Sue, Chris and Lorie

RENTAL EQUIPMENT

GRASSWORKS WEED WIPER

The Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District's now owns a GrassWorks Weed Wiper. It helps eliminate noxious weeds fast, effective, and economically. It allows the landowner to run the specialized synthetic carpet covered steel rotating drum very saturated. Therefore an ample amount of chemical is available to apply to the targeted weeds. With this constant rotation, any drip issues are eliminated. It applies the chemicals to the stems and the underside of the leaves. This is the weakest portion of the plants which provides an excellent kill. With the adjustment height chemicals are only applied to the targeted weeds and not wasting chemicals on the desirable crops, grasses, and clovers that the landowner wants to keep. (2) landowners rented the Weed Wiper this year which resulted in (61) acres being treated.

PASTURE & CROP DRAG

The MSWCD owns a pasture drag to better distribute manure into the ground and reduce runoff in early spring months. We had (11) landowners rent the Drag with 625 acres being treated.

MULTI FLORA ROSE PROGRAM

The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District is heavily involved in the administration and coordination of Bath County's multi-flora rose program. During the year 56 landowners were serviced with 2,180 acres of land treated. This resulted in 107 mixes of spray being distributed. The County of Bath purchased 143 (2 oz.) containers of Ally and 71 gallons of Aquagene.

NO-TILL SEEDER

A major emphasis of any soil & water conservation district is reducing soil erosion and improving water quality. One thrust of the Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote the use of no-till seeding. The District owns two seeders. During the year 530 acres of orchard grass, clover, timothy, rye, and alfalfa were seeded, resulting in a soil savings of 1,250 tons of soil that would have been downhill, possibly entering our streams and rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.

POULTRY LITTER SPREADER

The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District owns three poultry litter spreaders. They are used to help landowners spread their litter more efficiently and therefore help to improve water quality. It gives landowners a better understanding of nutrient management and the importance of following nutrient management plans. The District rents the spreaders out on a daily basis. During the year 53 days were utilized spreading litter and lime (50 days for poultry litter and 3 days of spreading lime.). This resulted in 2,365 acres being applied using "Mini-Nutrient" plans.



Sprayer used for the Rose Program

CHESAPEAKE BAY COST-SHARE PROGRAM

The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District includes both the James River Watershed, and is the headwaters for the Potomac River. The Virginia Agriculture Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program (VACS) is administered by (DCR) Department of Conservation & Recreation through local SWCD's as well as the state portion of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The total amount obligated for the 2022 BMP Cost-Share Program is \$1,500,233.01. The program's goal is to improve water quality in our rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. We paid out the following in Cost-Share Payments from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022:

VACS Total Paid : \$379,996.51 (\$ 11,528.13 for 2019 CB VACS , \$ 127,883.83 2020 CB VACS, \$ 213,315.27 2021 CB VACS, \$ 27,269.28 2022 CB VACS)

Several Best Management Programs (BMP's) funded by the state help the district to implement the Nutrient reduction strategies. Some of the more popular practices used were:

SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/ wide buffer & grazing land mgmt.
SL-6N Stream Exclusion w/ narrow buffer & grazing land mgmt.
WP-2N Stream Protection (fencing w/narrow width buffer)
WP-2W Stream Protection (fencing w/wide width buffer)

SL-8H Harvestable Cover Crop
SL-8B Small Grain Cover Crop
SL-1 Long Term Permanent Vegetative Cover on Cropland
FR-3 Woodland Buffer and Filter Area

2022 ENVIROTHON

We participated in the 2022 Area I Envirothon by attending the virtual trainings and Lorie attended the Area I Envirothon competition as a working volunteer. Lorie was in charge of tabulating all the test's scores. Seven teams from area High Schools participated this year. The (3) top teams at the end of the day were: 1st place; Harrisonburg High School; 2nd Place: Fort Defiance High School; 3rd Place: Central High School FFA.



WildLife Station



Soil Pit Station



Forestry Station



Special Topic Station

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We partnered with Virginia Cooperative Extension's "Meet the ANR agents" Program. We provided refreshments and Lorie attended programs that were held at the Dairy Barn in Warm Springs for (3) sessions. These sessions included "An introduction to Extension" with Berkeley Cassady, "Basic Management Principles for Livestock" with John Benner, "Getting Ready for the Growing Season" with Jason Cooper. We partnered with Millboro Elementary and Virginia Cooperative Extension for their Water Shed Education Program. We provided the enviroscape for the program. Alleghany High School FAA program used our enviroscape for most of 2021-2022 school year.

Soil Surveys

Bath, Highland, and Alleghany County surveys are available on the internet at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>. There are instructions to help guide the user in outlining an area of interest and producing a soil map and information. Additional soil reports and descriptions can be obtained at Soil Data Mart @ <http://soildatamart.nrcs.gov> which is fairly easy to navigate.

Thank You

We would like to thank all cooperating agencies and governmental units at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as the fine people that encompass the Mountain District for their cooperation and support. The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District program is a program for the people, and only through the cooperation of the people will it succeed.