



Conservation On The Ground

Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District

Spring 2011

Two Directors Recognized with Service Awards

At the 72nd Annual Meeting of the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) that was held December 5-7 at the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke, Virginia, Frankie Townsend and W. Todd Henley were recognized for their many years of voluntary service.



Frankie Townsend, King William County, pictured here with LouAnn Wallace, VASWCD Vice President, receiving his 40 year service pin.



Todd Henley, King & Queen County, pictured here with LouAnn Wallace, VASWCD Vice President receiving his 30 year service pin.

The Three Rivers SWCD would like to thank both directors for their spirit, drive and dedication that has made our District what it is today.



Area Conservation Leaders Recognized

The Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District held its Annual Awards Banquet on February 28 at Lowery's Restaurant to recognize area adult and youth conservation leaders for their outstanding contributions to the preservation of our natural resources. There were fifty guests on hand to honor the recipients. Frank Townsend, Chairman delivered the welcome and introduction of the guests. The following Conservation Awards were presented:

Outstanding Stewardship Award: Brooks Farm, Essex County; **Bay Friendly Clean Water Farm Award:** Cohoke Farm, King William County; **Wildlife Conservationist of the Year:** Phil Minor, King & Queen County; **Partnership Award:** Mike Budd, DGIF/NRCS & Faye Hundley, Farm Bureau Women's Committee; **Wildlife Food Plot Competition Winners:** Bryce Tignor & Elyse Betz, Essex High School and Nick Lancaster, Peyton Hill, Lewis Redman and Hunter Smith, King William High School. Also Shannon Ayers, Essex High School, discussed her experiences at the Three Rivers SWCD sponsored Youth Conservation Camp at Virginia Tech.

Cover Crop Root Boxes “On the Road”

In February, the Three Rivers SWCD root boxes were featured in three workshops held around the state. This was a cooperative effort between Wayne Pierson, Conservation Specialist, Three Rivers SWCD and Chris Lawrence, Agronomist, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

“On the Road” the boxes were featured at the Virginia No Till Alliance Conference and Trade Show in Harrisonburg, the Planter Set-up and Maintenance Workshop in Rocky Mount and the Southeast Virginia Conservation Tillage Meeting held in Petersburg. The events were well received with over 400 guests in attendance.

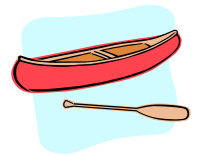
Farmers in our region plant cover crops each year to conserve the most basic and truly valuable agricultural resource—the soil. Until recently, they could only see the impacts of their management actions above ground. With this new educational tool, farmers can finally visualize the impacts of the root systems below the surface. The boxes were constructed of wood with plexiglass sides. The boxes were filled with local soil and the cover crops planted were rye, hairy vetch, tillage radishes and a cocktail mix that included cereal grains, legumes and blue lupin. The plexiglass allowed people to see the potential for quick root system development and expansion continuously over the winter, despite relatively small surface vegetative growth.

The root boxes will continue to be displayed in our region at field days and workshops.

In the photo, the bottom arrows highlight the cover crop root depth observed six weeks after early planting.



Youth Conservation Camp



Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District will once again sponsor a student to the 2011 Youth Conservation Camp. The camp will be held on the campus of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia during the dates of July 10-16, 2011. The camp is designed to enlighten and expand the students knowledge of natural resources conservation. There will be a minimum of classroom work, with emphasis on outdoor learning. The opportunity to share experiences with other youth from across the State and have a chance to show leadership skills in an informal setting will be available. Participants must be students in grades 9-12. No graduate of high school may attend camp. Previous Youth Conservation Camp campers are ineligible to attend. The participant information must be completed and sent by April 29, 2011 to Three Rivers SWCD. If you would like more information about the camp you can contact Anne Davis at 804-443-2327, ext. 101.

Reminder

VA Agricultural BMP Cost Share Program Deadlines

Cover Crops must be destroyed using mechanical or chemical means or by grazing between March 15 and May 15. Please call the Three Rivers SWCD office by **May 16** to notify us when you have destroyed your cover crop.

Nutrient Management Plans: All producers signed up for NM-1 in 2009, 2010 and 2011 will need to have their nutrient management plans revised or written. Make sure you meet with your plan writers as soon as possible. All nutrient management plans and revisions must be on file and complete by March 1, 2011.

All applications that fail to meet all program requirements by June 15, 2011 will be cancelled. If you have any questions, please contact Wayne, Meaghann or Marlene at 443-2327 ext 101

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Signup Announced

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will be conducting a general signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) from March 14 through April 15, 2011.

A general signup is a competitive bidding process where farmers and/or landowners offer to take cropland out of annual crop production and devote it to a conservation use for a 10-15 year contract period. Conservation uses could include native and warm season grasses, trees, wildlife areas and pollinator habitat.

Under the competitive bidding process, each offer will be evaluated based on: reductions in soil erosion; improvements in water and air quality; wildlife cover; enduring benefits after the contract ends; and the cost factor.

Any farmer or landowner who has leased or owned the offered land for at least one year prior to the April 15th signup deadline is eligible to participate. Cropland that was planted annually or seeded to multi-year grasses or legumes is eligible.

Contracts for accepted bids will go into effect October 1, 2011. Assistance is available to help establish the permanent conservation cover on cropland accepted into the program. Annual rental payments will be made for each year of the 10-15 year CRP contract. Rental payments are based on the soil types of the offered land. For more information, contact the FSA office located in the Rappahannock Office Building at 772 Richmond Beach Road (next to the DMV building) or call 804-443-3571 ext .2.

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Three Rivers SWCD programs, activities, and employment opportunities are available to all people on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, political affiliation or handicap.



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