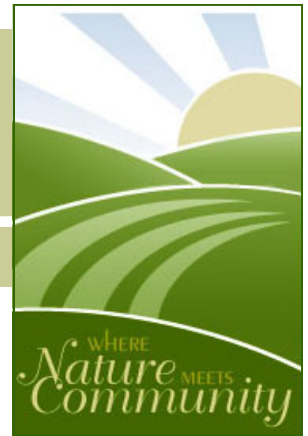


Conservation Conversations

Published By

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May 2016

Farm Heritage Trail Grand Opening



The grand opening of the Farm Heritage Trail was held on May 7th, 2016 at Sandy Mush Farm. The weather was spectacular as a crowd of approximately 100 enjoyed old-time music from a live band and

heard inspiring presentations from David Everett; Terri Wells; Commissioner Brownie Newman; Representative John Ager; Representative Brian Turner; and Bill Yarborough from the N. C. Department of Agriculture.

Sandy Mush Herb Nursery conducted a plant sale during event and attendees had the option of a hike on the farm. The event also featured a cookout lunch at the Sandy Mush Community Center across from the farm.

The Farm Heritage Trail is a scenic driving and cycling route through the rural agricultural communities in northwest Buncombe County with farm stops, conserved farms, and an ongoing calendar of events: hikes, farm to table dinners, educational opportunities and fun activities for the entire family throughout the year. There is always something to experience on the *Farm Heritage Trail!*



2016 Envirothon

The North Carolina Envirothon is an annual event in which teams compete for recognition and scholarships by demonstrating their knowledge of environmental science and natural resource



management. The teams, each consisting of five students from participating schools, home study groups, and environmental clubs, exercise their training and problem-solving skills in a competition centered on five testing categories; soils/land use; aquatic ecology; forestry; wildlife; and current environmental issues. High School and Middle School competitions are held in each of the eight areas of the N. C. Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The top seven teams from each area competition go on to the state Envirothon held at Cedar Rock Park near Burlington, North Carolina.



Twenty-five middle school and twenty-three high school teams from sixteen counties in Western North Carolina competed in the Area I Envirothon held April 9, 2016 in Waynesville.

DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

The Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District's mission is to conserve the soil, water, and related natural resources of Buncombe County by providing education, information, technical assistance, and economic incentives to county citizens and by establishing new programs in concert with other appropriate agencies and organizations to meet changing needs.

Buncombe County sponsored the following teams in the Area I competition:

Green Mountain Boys—1st Place Middle School
Homeschool
Cynthia Cobb



Ice Spiderz—5th Place High School
TC Roberson
Kevin Keen



Awesome Alliterating Ashevilleian Anemones—8th Place Middle School
Valley Springs Middle
Natalie Henry-Howell
John Bell



Solar Sisters—14th Place High School
TC Roberson
Kevin Keen

Dark Thunder—9th Place Middle School
Valley Springs Middle
Natalie Henry-Howell
John Bell



Free Soil Party—15th Place High School
TC Roberson
Kevin Keen



Bearly Koalafied—12th Place Middle School
Valley Springs Middle
Natalie Henry-Howell
John Bell

North Carolina Envirothon (State Competition)

The *Green Mountain Boys* finished 22nd in the Middle School contest. The *Awesome Alliterating Ashevilleian Anemones* (competing because the 7th place middle school team was unable to attend) finished 25th; and *Dark Thunder* (alternate team) was not officially ranked since they were an alternate team. The *Ice Spiderz* represented Buncombe County at the state Envirothon on the High School level and finished 30th in the state competition.

Fierce Falcons—17th Place Middle School
Valley Springs Middle
Natalie Henry-Howell
John Bell



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR TEAMS, ADVISORS, RESOURCE PEOPLE, and TAIRA LANCE and ARIEL DIXON FOR A JOB WELL DONE!!!

Area I Envirothon Contributors!



CAMP WILD



Buncombe County Soil & Water will be hosting a Youth Environmental Stewardship Camp this summer July 25 - 29, 2016. Camp WILD is a 5 day long summer day camp with one night of camping, focusing on having fun while learning in the WILD outdoors! We explore some of the local sights and attractions of WNC while learning about how to conserve, protect, respect and enjoy the wilderness! Camp Wild is open to current Envirothon students and remaining slots will be determined on an application process of current 6th - 9th grade students. The cost for the will be \$30 per student thanks to a generous grant from the Pigeon River Fund. Areas of study include soil science; forestry; environmental issues; solid waste; recycling; aquatics; wildlife; and water quality. **Contact Taira Lance at 828-250-4787 or taira.lance@buncombecounty.org for information.**

Cost Share Programs Sign-Up

Sign-up for the following cost-sharing programs will be held July 1 thru July 31st, 2016.

The **Agricultural Cost Share Program** provides a 75% cost share on over 60 best management practices

including those intended to reduce sediment and nutrient loss; animal waste management; agrichemical pollution prevention; stream protection; and erosion/nutrient reduction.

The **Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program** provides a 75% (caps may apply) on best management practices on farms that increase the availability of water such as ponds; pond repairs; water collection systems; increasing the efficiency of irrigation; and water supply wells.

The **Community Conservation Assistance Program** provides a 75% cost share on best management practices that improve water quality in an urban setting. Practices include seeding eroding areas; streambank stabilization; backyard wetlands and rain gardens; pet-waste receptacles; cisterns, and grassed swales.

Peterson Conservation Easement

On May 13, the Buncombe SWCD closed on a 181 acre permanent conservation easement on Cloud 9 Farm, owned and operated by Janet Peterson. The farm raises beef cattle, blueberries, chickens, and produces honey. The farm does sawmilling and agri-tourism on a portion of the farm not in the conservation easement. The easement was made possible by grants from Buncombe County and the N. C. Department of Agriculture. Janet has a strong conservation ethic and has installed several conservation practices in the past including livestock exclusion, watering tanks, and stream crossings. **Congratulations to Janet on her conservation easement!**



Left to right: Attorney Lynn Cox, Janet Peterson, Ariel Dixon, and Janine Owens (NCDA)

District Board Members

JEFF FOSTER	Chair
ELISE ISRAEL	Vice-Chair
DAVID SNELSON	Secretary
WILLIAM HAMILTON	Treasurer
LOUISE SCRUGGS	Member

District and NRCS Staff

GARY HIGGINS	District Director
TAIRA LANCE	Environmental Educator
ANTHONY DOWDLE	NCACSP Soil Conservationist
ARIEL DIXON	Soil Conservationist/Farmland Pres.
EMILY KOONE	NRCS Soil Conservationist

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Spring Field Days!!

The Buncombe SWCD sponsors Environmental Education Field Days in the fall and spring. Students travel to eight stations on the day of the event where they learn about a variety of subject areas from resource specialists. The students spend 20 minutes at the station listening and participating in hands-on learning activities. The subjects are tailored to fit into the standard course of study for fifth graders.

The Spring 2016 field days were scheduled for two days but some classes had to drop out reducing the event to one day. The weather was beautiful as the District hosted 240 5th graders who learned about pollinators, reptile ecology, stream ecology, the water cycle, wildlife, salamanders, waste reduction, and agriculture. *A special thanks to all our presenters:*

Sarah Coury, Bee City USA
Shannon Lora, WNC Nature Center—AmeriCorps
Laura Evans, Riverlink
Keisha Lipe, City of Asheville
Susan Fay & Amy Kinsella, NC Forest Service
April Byrge & Lisa Nagurny, Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Christine Brown—Asheville GreenWorks
Warren Wilson College Farm Crew

And THANKS to the Warren Wilson College Farm for the use of their fields!!



Students learn about wildlife from Amy Kinsella and Susan Fay

MCINTYRE FARMS

WOODMIZER SAWMILLING, NURSERY STOCK
CUSTOM WOODWORKING
TRACTOR & BACKHOE WORK

Swannanoa, NC 28778

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