

Conservation Conversations

Published By

Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District
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NOVEMBER 2016

CHRISTMAS TREE SALE



The Buncombe SWCD will be selling #1 grade Fraser Fir Christmas Trees again this year. The trees are locally grown and harvested a day or so before the sale to insure maximum freshness and longevity. Fraser Firs have been judged the Nation's best 12 times (more than any other species) and are the most popular Christmas trees in America. This year we will be selling 5-6 foot trees for \$32; 6-7 foot trees for \$36; and 7-8 foot trees for \$42.

We will also be selling Fraser Fir wreaths and the cost is \$18 for 22 inch; \$20 for a 24 inch; and \$25 for a 26 inch. All you have to do to get a tree or wreath is call the SWCD office to reserve it, send us your payment, and then come by the office one of the sale days and pick it up. You may call the District anytime between now and November 22nd to buy a tree. The dates and times of the sale are December 1st and 2nd from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The sale location is 49 Mount Carmel Road in the Erwin Hills community. Proceeds from the sale will be used to benefit our environmental education programs, so buy a tree and help our environment too!!



Buncombe County FRIENDS OF AG BREAKFAST

Tuesday November 15, 2016
At 7:00 a.m.

Virginia Boone Building
1301 Fanning Bridge Road, Fletcher NC



Topic: "Industrial Hemp in NC" by:

Tyler Jenkins, Chief Operating Officer of Bio-Regen Innovations Cooperative; and

Dr. Alexander Stewart, NCDA Research Stations Division Director

Please join us and enjoy a complimentary breakfast featuring local food from Buncombe County and learn about this important subject!



Call Ariel Zijp at 828-250-4794 to RSVP or email to Ariel.Zijp@buncombecounty.org

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.

2016 FALL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FIELD DAYS



The District held its fall Environmental Education Field Days on October 24, 25, and 26th at Veteran's Park in Black Mountain which is a part of the town of Black Mountain park system. Field day stations were located behind the

Grey Eagle Arena, and along the Garden Greenway Trail. Students were able to access the Swannanoa River at the stream ecology station and study organisms in the stream bed. Approximately 750 students attended during the three days and rotated between

8 stations including soils, stream dynamics, natural science, reptile ecology, steam ecology, waste reduction,



pollinators, and the water cycle. On the 25th, a 9th station was added and students were able to learn about invasive species.



Our presenters were Dalton Buchanan with the Division of Soil and Water Conservation; Creeden Kowal with the Swain County Soil and Water Conservation District; the Montreat College

Environmental Educators; Candace Thomson, AmeriCorps with Friends of the WNC Nature Center; Michaela Hyams from Riverlink; Christine Brown and Rick Carpenter from Asheville GreenWorks; Keisha Lipe from the City of Asheville; and Seth O'Shields & Emily Brawley from the Great Smokies National Park. Thanks so much for a great job presenters!!



MOUNTAIN STATE FAIR



The Buncombe SWCD was a part of the Area I Soil and Water Conservation Districts exhibit at the Mountain State Fair September 9-18, 2016. The exhibit was located in the Davis Arena and featured the Swain County Soil Exhibit trailer along with brochures and handouts from Area 1 Districts and the Buncombe SWCD display. Staff from several Districts worked 4 hour shifts and answered questions and greeted visitors to the fair.

FREE GRANT APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR ON-FARM ENERGY GRANTS

The Energy Cost-Share Assistance Program (EnergyCAP) is a free nonprofit program that helps WNC farmers find grant funding and connect with energy professionals to install solar panels, greenhouse heating upgrades, LED lights, insulation, and more. Different grants have different deadlines, and some can be stacked. Visit www.energycap.org or call [828-649-5115](tel:828-649-5115) to learn more.



EnergyCAP is also conducting a survey with Appalachian State University to learn more about energy use on WNC farms. Information obtained from the survey will be used to strengthen EnergyCAP's grant programs and better serve WNC farmers. If you would like to participate, you can take the survey at www.energycap.org/survey.

2016/2017 CONSERVATION EDUCATION CONTESTS

The Buncombe Soil & Water Conservation District is sponsoring Conservation Poster, Essay, and Public Speaking contests this year!

The theme for all the contests is "Soil and Water.....Yours for Life".

This subject focuses on the importance of soil and water to our future and our daily lives and the importance of conservation and sustainability.



Who's eligible?

Poster Contest -Any Buncombe County student (public, private, or home school) in **3rd - 5th grade!**

Essay Contest - Any Buncombe County student (public, private, or home school) in the **6th grade!**

Public Speaking Contest - Any Buncombe County student (public, private, or home school) in the **7th or 8th grade!**

The Poster and Essay contests runs until **January 11, 2017**. All entries must reach the District by 4:00 pm on that date. The Public Speaking Contest will be held at the District office on **January 12, 2017**.

Prizes:

Not only do the contests provide a great way for the students to explore an issue on their own, but there are prizes for the students and winning teacher! **There will be a 1st, 2nd & 3rd place county-wide awards given in all the Contests.**



- 1st place - \$50 cash
- 2nd place - \$25 cash
- 3rd place - \$15 cash

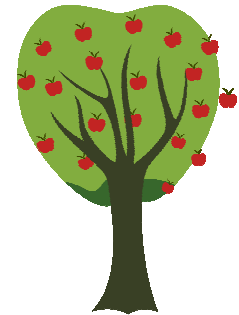
**SEEDLING SALE
REMINDER**

The District will be having it annual tree seedling sale the first week of March 2017. We will be sending out more information prior to the sale. In addition to White Pine seedlings we will be selling Black Locust, Crape Myrtle, Eastern Redbud, Crabapple, Flowering Dogwood, Persimmon, River Birch, and White Oak.

Hardwood seedlings will be sold for **1 dollar each** and White Pine will be sold for **50 cents each**. March is an ideal time to plant bare root seedlings, so plan ahead and come out to our seedling sale! Look for more information in our February 2017 newsletter and on the County website.

For the first time, the District will be selling fruit and flowering plants as well. Below are some examples of the types of plants we will be selling. We will have the exact list and prices in our February 2017 Conservation Conversations.

- Apple trees
- Pear trees
- Raspberry bushes
- Blackberry bushes
- Sweet Shrub
- Blueberry Bushes
- Strawberry Plants
- Serviceberry



District Board Members

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District and NRCS Staff

GARY HIGGINS	District Director
TAIRA LANCE	Environmental Educator
ANTHONY DOWDLE	NCACSP Soil Conservationist
ARIEL ZIJP	Farmland Preservation Coordinator
EMILY KOONE	NRCS Soil Conservationist

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2016 SANDY MUSH CYCLE TO FARM



The staff of the Buncombe SWCD assisted with the 2016 Cycle to Farm in Sandy Mush the first day of October. New Belgium Brewery was the major sponsor of the

event and the ride began and ended at the New Belgium Center in Asheville. The route took riders through some of the most scenic farmland in Western North Carolina where they could stop and sample and purchase farm products. At the conclusion of the event participants attended a fabulous after party and enjoyed a farm-to-table meal.

The Buncombe SWCD staff assisted with refreshments at the farm stop in Sandy Mush.

49 MOUNT CARMEL OPEN HOUSE

The Buncombe SWCD along with the Buncombe County Center of the N. C. Cooperative Extension Service held an open house at their facility on October 27, 2016. Over 100 citizens came to see the facility and enjoy some home cooked chili and cornbread!



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