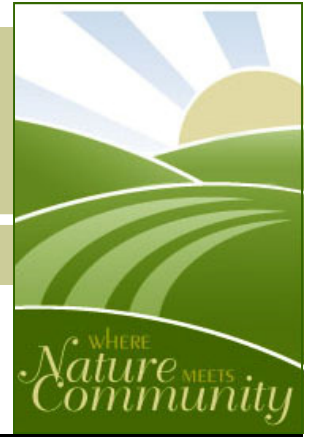


Conservation Conversations

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August 2017

NEW WETLAND AT BARNARDSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



The Buncombe SWCD worked closely with the Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation & Development office in Marshall, NC and Barnardsville Elementary School to plan and install a stormwater wetland. The idea for the project originated with Jessica Hocz, Executive Director of Mountain Valleys, who has been working with landowners in the Ivy River watershed on projects that improve water quality. The stormwater wetland captures runoff from the school parking lot and some grassed areas where the water is detained, cooled, and absorbed by plants. This removes pollutants in the runoff and reduces thermal pollution of



the Ivy River, located about 1,000 feet downstream of the school. The project designer was Jeff Young with the N. C. Department of



Agriculture, Division of Soil and Water Conservation. Clarke Wyatt with Buncombe County Schools provided contracting services, helped coordinate the

project, and provided assistance with several aspects of construction. Danna Grimes, the school principal, also assisted with the planning and implementation of the project. Officers from the Erwin High School FFA spent several hours planting over 300 wetland plants and the Barnardsville Elementary Green Team helped the next day with spreading mulch around the plants.

Funding was provided by Buncombe County Schools, Mountain Valleys RC & D, and the Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District through the Community Conservation Assistance Program.



CAMP WILD 2017

Environmental education camps are a great way for students to learn about a variety of issues pertaining to our natural resources. Camps afford students enough time to do more in-depth studies and do hands-on learning



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.

activities. Students come away with a new appreciation of the great outdoors and knowledge of the natural environment that will guide their decisions in the future.



The Buncombe SWCD hosted two one-week sessions of Camp WILD this summer. Fourteen middle school students attended the first camp held June 19th thru 23rd. They started the week with a visit to the Biltmore Estate and the greenhouses, hydroponic production, and making biodiesel. They also studied soils while on the estate. Tuesday began with a morning visit to the Davidson River and Sliding Rock, followed by wetland studies at the Pink Beds and a visit to a fish hatchery. Wednesday included a high altitude visit to the Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center at Purchase Knob in Haywood County, and snorkeling to look at aquatic life in the Pigeon River. Thursday, the students did geo-caching at the Old Ray Mica Mine, followed by a rainy night of camping. Friday's activities included a nature hike, and tubing to round out the week. Eleven students attended the high school camp which was held August 7th thru 11th and had some of the same type of activities, but with some changes such as a team building exercise at Adventure Park, and camping at Carolina Hemlock.



PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE PRESENTS "FARM HERITAGE TRAIL: PRESERVATION AS A LANDSCAPE"

Asheville, NC-

Buncombe Farmland is a precious resource in need of protection. On Saturday July 15, the Preservation Society of Asheville Buncombe hosted a presentation at the Sandy Much



Community Center on the Farm Heritage Trail: Preservation as a Landscape. This event was presented by the creators of the Farm Heritage Trail, Ariel Zijp, Farmland Preservation Coordinator for Buncombe County Soil and Water, and Terri Wells, 9th generation farmer and Farmland Preservation Board Member. Zijp and Wells shared their perspective on farming heritage and the importance of farmland preservation. After the presentation, there was a question and answer session from an intrigued audience, where Zijp, Wells and several community historians and conservationists shared their knowledge and experience. Once the event ended, the group was encouraged to drive the Farm Heritage Trail and to explore Northwest Buncombe County's farms and agrarian views.

About Farm Heritage Trail

The Farm Heritage Trail is a scenic driving and cycling route through the rural agricultural communities of Alexander, Leicester, Newfound and Sandy Mush in northwest Buncombe County. The public is welcome to travel the public roads of this trail and enjoy viewing the conserved family farms, with designated signage, that are along the route. The entire route is a leisurely two-hour drive while enjoying a few stops along the way. Trail riders may choose to follow the specific route or enter and exit at any point, selecting farms they may want to drive by or visit along the way. For more information

www.farmheritagetrail.org

Contact:

To learn more about the Farm Heritage Trail, please contact

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2017 Christmas Tree Sale!



The District will be having its annual Christmas Tree Sale around December 1, 2017. The high quality #1 Fraser firs are from a local supplier and are picked up and sold within a couple of days of harvest so they are fresh. This year we will be selling 6 to 7 foot trees and all you need to do is call our office, place your order and pick up your tree when it arrives. This year, we will have a limited number of extra

trees available for those who prefer to drop in and buy. The trees will be very priced very competitively. You may place your order at any time up until November 27th. We will post more information on the Buncombe County website and in the November newsletter. Profits from the sale go to support our environmental education programs.

NEW EMPLOYEE AT THE DISTRICT AND CES

Jessica Bryson, a resident of Fairview began working with Buncombe County in April of 2017, and was transferred to the District and Cooperative Extension the first week of August to fill a newly established position. The position will be shared jointly between the N. C. Cooperative Extension Service and the Buncombe Soil and Water Conservation District and involves program support to both agencies. Jessica graduated from Western Carolina University with a Bachelors in Business Administrative Law and a Bachelors in Marketing. She has a background in social media marketing, event planning, administration, and legal issues. She loves hiking and writing/reading in her free time. According to Jessica "There is nothing a good homemade meal can't fix"!



DROUGHT PASTURE RENOVATION COST SHARE

The Buncombe SWCD has a limited amount of funds available to renovate pastures damaged by the 2016 drought. Funds were made available through the N. C. Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil and Water Conservation. Cost share is seventy-five percent of the actual costs not to exceed \$ 225 on each acre renovated. If producers meet income requirements or are in an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District, they qualify for ninety percent cost share not to exceed \$ 270 per acre.

Land eligible for the practice must be land that has been grazed, and not hayland or cropland. Producers must manage fertility, stocking rates, and stop/start grazing heights to minimize the potential for cost shared fields to be overgrazed and to ensure that a good stand is maintained. Grazing animals must be excluded from renovated pastures until forage reaches the desired start grazing height. For most pastures in our area that would be 6 to 8 inches. Stop grazing heights for good management are required and that is usually around 2 to 3 inches for most pastures in this area. Renovated pastures must be maintained for ten years.

If you are interested in knowing more about the program, please call the District office. Funds must be contracted by November 1 of this year.

2017 CONSERVATION EDUCATION CONTESTS

Poster Contest: 3rd to 5th grades
Essay Contest: 6th grade
Public Speaking: 7th and 8th grades

Prizes at the County level are:

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

County winners advance to the Area I and Statewide

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 ZIJP	Soil Conservationist/Farmland Pres.
JESSICA BRYSON	Office Assistant
JOHN OTTINGER, EMILY POLMAN, JOHN GEORGE	NRCS Soil Conservationists

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towed to the farm using a

contests. The contests are open to all students in school or home schooled. For more information about the contests or to sign up, please contact Taira Lance at taira.lance@buncombecounty.org or call her at the District office.

MOUNTAIN STATE FAIR

Mark your calendars for September 8th through 17 for the Mountain State Fair!! Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the westernmost counties will have a booth in the Davis Arena, so be on the lookout for it!

EQUIPMENT RENTALS

WEED WIPER: The weed wiper can be used to control invasive weeds and small brushy growth in hay and pasture fields, resulting in better stands of grass and higher productivity. The wiper can be



pickup or SUV then attached to a tractor or ATV for use in the field. The wiper is 12 feet wide in the field use configuration. \$30/day

NO-TILL GRASS DRILL: The Truax FlexII seed drill features double disc furrow openers and depth bands to optimize seed placement and seed to soil contact. It has multiple seed boxes allowing it to seed native fluffy seeds, cool season species, small grains, legumes, and wildflowers. Planting can be accomplished as no-till and inter-seeding in most conditions. \$50 minimum or \$10/acre.



POST DRIVER: The post driver can be used to improve existing fencing, expand pastures, and add cross fencing for rotations and will reduce labor costs and improve profitability. The unit is capable of driving up to eight inch diameter posts and has a pilot auger to use in if the soil is difficult to penetrate. \$50/day



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