### Alleghany Soil & Water Conservation District

**“The purpose of Conservation:**

*The greatest good to the greatest number of people for the longest time*  ~ Gifford Pinchot

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### History of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Soil and Water Conservation Districts and their governing Boards of Supervisors were formed nationwide out of concern for the nation’s soil and water resources. This concern grew out of the devastating Dust Bowl in the west, severe water erosion in the south, and other conservation problems of the 1930’s and even earlier. Legislation adopted by individual states, beginning in 1937, formed local Soil and Water Conservation Districts of which there are now 96 in North Carolina.

Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett, a North Carolina native from Anson County, was instrumental in coordinating national efforts toward solving the critical conservation problems that the country faced. Dr. Bennett, known internationally as the “Father of Soil and Water Conservation”, can be credited with laying the foundation for the soil and water conservation programs of today.

Through the efforts of Bennett and his close working relationship with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a model law known as the Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law was drafted which would enable states to create local soil and water conservation districts.

The purpose of these districts was to provide local input and direction to the fledging federal conservation programs that were administered by the USDA-Soil Conservation Service which were established two years earlier in 1935. On February 27, 1937, President Roosevelt corresponded with state governors across the United States, urging each state to adopt legislation similar to the “model law”. That same year, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a soil and water conservation districts law known as NC General Statute 139, and the Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District, in the home county of Dr. Bennett, was chartered on August 4, 1937.
Brown Creek District was the first Soil and Water Conservation District organized in the United States although 21 other states enacted similar legislation later in 1937. Nearly four-fifths of the states enacted similar laws in the next three years. By 1947, all of the other states and the territories of Hawaii and Alaska had passed legislation which created local Districts.

Under this law, Soil and Water Conservation Districts were organized to plan and carry out a locally led, voluntary incentive based conservation program that addressed local needs. District affairs are managed by individuals and groups involved in a coordinated conservation program, utilizing resources from local, state, and federal agencies. It was felt that local people, working with the Federal Government and federal agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service, could better guide and direct programs aimed at addressing local natural resource concerns.

At first, Districts were organized along watershed rather than county boundaries. As a result, in the early days most districts included more than one county or parts of several counties. Many of the original state laws that were established on a watershed basis were later changed to allow conservation districts to be established along county lines. Today, most districts are organized in that way. One exception in North Carolina is the Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation District which includes Camden, Currituck, Chowan, Perquimans, and Pasquotank counties.

Today the 96 North Carolina Soil and Water Districts in North Carolina are serving over 85,000 school children and adults each year through their conservation education efforts. In addition, Soil and Water Conservation Districts are instrumental in improving the state’s natural resources by providing technical assistance to landowners to help them solve their natural resource problems through voluntary, incentive based conservation programs. Their actions are improving the lives of all North Carolina citizens through implementation of programs that protect and improve soil and water quality on both agricultural and non-agricultural lands.

History of Alleghany Soil and Water Conservation District

Soil and water conservation has a long history in Alleghany County and has involved many people. It began on the local level when Alleghany and Ashe Counties were organized April 21, 1941 as the New River Soil Conservation District. The first board of supervisors included: Wade E. Eller, J. W. Gambill, Dennis Franklin, Emmett Reeves, and Alton Thompson.

The current Alleghany Soil and Water Conservation District was formed April 11, 1961, when Alleghany separated from the New River District, as a governmental subdivision of North Carolina in an act providing for the division of large conservation districts that were originally established along watershed boundaries.

Members of the original Board of Supervisors for the Alleghany SWCD were: Richard Morrison, Emerson Wilson, Lonnie Davis, Jim Leff Osborne, and Robert Joines.
Governor Beverly Perdue has proclaimed the month of August as “SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION AWARENESS MONTH” in North Carolina.
Joint District Issues Committee Meeting

On behalf of Yadkin SWCD, Area 2 DIC Chair, Jo Linville, welcomed Areas 1, 2 and 8 to the annual joint DIC Meeting on July 24th at the Yadkin Campus of Surry Community College in Yadkinville.

The agenda included updates from the following: Areas 1, 2 and 8; the NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation Director, Pat Harris; NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation Executive Director, Michelle Lovejoy; NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Executive Director, Dick Fowler; NCASWCD staff Julie Hinshaw and David Williams; NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, Alan Walker.

Jason Walker, Yadkin SWCD, recently received a national award from the American Council of Engineering Companies on April 17th in Washington DC for his work on the Deep Creek Watershed Dam 5 D project.
NCSWCD Annual Spot Checks

May 25, 2012

Alleghany SWCD
Vice-Chairman
Jim Dixon

Supervisors
Bobby Evans
Terry Hall
Chris Huysman

conduct spot checks on various cost
share projects located within
Alleghany County

SE NACD Annual Meeting-Destin Florida

Linda Hash, SECDEA Treasurer, attended the SE NACD Annual Meeting held on July 29-31 in Destin Florida. The conference included roundtable discussions with NRCS leaders and partners; a Soil to Spoon presentation; What NACD does for you; farm tours of Chautaugua Vineyards, Gum Creek Lodge and Marshall Farms, Inc.; conservation tours of Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, Eglin Air Force Armament Museum and Anderson Pond Conservation Project; a narrated water quality tour of Destin Harbor, East Pass at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico, Holiday Isle and Norriego point; water quality issues and concerns were discussed during the tour.

Alleghany SWCD
Awarded Grant

Linda Hash, Alleghany SWCD, is pleased to announce that Alleghany County has been awarded $15,000 from the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to be used in the development and implementation of a county wide Farmland Protection Plan.

A local committee will be formed to identifying the needs, issues and concerns to be addressed in the Farmland Protection Plan. Members of this committee will include representation from Alleghany SWCD Board, Alleghany Farmland Preservation Advisory Board, Alleghany County Extension Service, Blue Ridge Conservancy, NC Forestry Service, NC Wildlife Resources, NC Farm Bureau, NC Farm Credit, local farmers and businesses within the county.
Awards Banquet-May 8, 2012

The Alleghany Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) held its annual awards program Tuesday, May 8th, at the Lions Club Pavilion. Those recognized included county winners in the 5th grade poster contest, 6th grade essay contest, and the 7th and 8th grade speech contest.

There were approximately 90 people present for the awards program including those students receiving awards and their families. Several teachers, principals, superintendent, assistant superintendent, county commissioner, and the Alleghany SWCD board and staff were also present to honor the conservation contests winners.

Alleghany SWCD Vice-Chair Jim Dixon was recognized for 35 years of dedicated service to Alleghany SWCD. County Commission Chair, Ken Richardson received a plaque in recognition for his many years of dedication and support of conservation programs in Alleghany County.

Congratulations to all those recognized!

Jr. Master Cattlemen Class

Six students from Alleghany and Ashe counties recently participated in the Jr. Master Cattlemen program offered by the NC Cooperative Extension Service in Alleghany. Topics covered during the week long course included Forage Production, Behavior & Handling, Health Management, Soil Sampling/Plant ID, Carcass Traits, Marketing, Farm Management, Body Conditioning Scoring, Fence Systems, Tractor Safety, and Environmental Concerns of Farming Operations.

The following students received a scholarship from the Alleghany and Ashe County Cattlemen Association:

Luke Souther-Alleghany  Kenneth Jones-Alleghany
Micheala Harless-Ashe  Dakota Elliott-Ashe

Farm Animal Day

A total of 93 second graders from Alleghany County attended the Farm Animal Day held May 11, 2012 at the Alleghany County Fairgrounds; the event was hosted by the NC Cooperative Extension Service.

Students spent the day learning about farm animals, medications, plants, animal by products and much more; students had a great time petting goats, sheep, calves and a miniature horse.
Tree Planting

Local AHS students plant trees at the Davis Ball Field (trees provided by Alleghany SWCD)
The various types of trees were donated by New River SWCD in Virginia

**Pictured L to R:**
- Houston Murphy
- Austin Sprinkle
- Sebastian Sandoval

Not pictured - teacher/instructor Zach Bennett

District Calendar

**August 23rd**—Farmland Protection Plan Committee Meeting
Conference Room/SWCD Building 9:00 am

**August 28th**—State Envirothon Meeting
Greensboro, NC 1:00 pm

**September 11th**—District Board Meeting
The Pines Restaurant 7:30 am

**September 25th**—District Issues Committee Meeting
Location TBA

**September 26th**—NW Envirothon Meeting
Boone, NC

**October 9th**—District Board Meeting
The Pines Restaurant 7:30 am

**October 11th**—Area 2 Fall Meeting
Location TBA

**November 13th**—FPP Advisory Board Meeting
Conference Room/SWCD Building 9:00 am
The Alleghany Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a governmental subdivision of the State of North Carolina, charged with the responsibility of promoting soil and water conservation and establishing conservation programs in the District. The District partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to carry out these responsibilities. As a local organization we work with citizens, agencies, and land owners to plan and direct programs for the conservation and development of our natural resources. We work closely with other state, federal, and local agencies, such as NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Resource Conservation and Development, US Army Corps of Engineers, NC Forest Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, NC Cooperative Extension, etc. to provide effective natural resource management and environmental education.

Please contact our office for more information about any of our programs

**ALLEGHANY SWCD**
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Sparta, NC  28675
Visit us on the web at: Alleghany Soil & Water Conservation District

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Office Hours:  8 am—5 pm, Monday—Friday

*Board meetings are open to the public and are held monthly on the 2nd Tuesday*