

Conservation Comments



**January 2012
Winter Edition**

Allegheny Soil & Water Conservation District

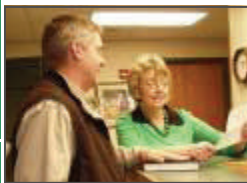
"Wetlands have a poor public image....Yet they are among the earth's greatest natural assets...mankind's waterlogged wealth"
Edward Maltby, *Waterlogged Wealth*, 1986

SWCD Board Welcomes
New Member

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Farmland Preservation
Program Updates

Soil and Water Board Extends Warm Welcome to New District Supervisor



Allegheny Soil and Water Conservation District extends a warm welcome to Chris Huysman who was recently sworn into to office as newest member of the SWCD board. Chris was appointment by the NC Soil and Water Commission and will fill Bobby Gambill's unexpired term.

5th Annual
Allegheny County
Envirothon Competition

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FPP Updates:

Requirements for Voluntary Agricultural Districts to meet minimum acreage as defined in Present-Use Value (PUV) were changed recently when Session Law 2011-219 and House Bill 406 was passed. The minimum acreage requirement has been removed; now land that is engaged in agriculture may qualify for enrollment in a voluntary agricultural district even though it does not qualify for taxation at its Present-Use Value. Previous qualifications required applicants to meet PUV requirements of at least 10 acres of agricultural land, at least 5 acres of horticultural land, or at least 20 acres of forest land.



NRCS Programs Update

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NCASWCD
Annual Meeting

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The definition for agriculture, agricultural and farming has also changed; the terms agriculture, agricultural, and farming refer to all of the following:

- * The cultivation of soil for production and harvesting of crops, including but not limited to fruits, vegetables, sod, flowers and ornamental plants
- * The planting and production of trees and timber
- * Dairying and the raising, management, care, and training of livestock, including horses, bees, poultry, and other animals for individual and public use, consumption, and marketing
- * Aquaculture as defined in G.S. 106-758
- * The operation, management, conservation, improvement, and maintenance of a farm and the structures and buildings on the farm, including building and structure repair, replacement, expansion, and construction incident to the farming operation

Beth Farrell-NCDA&CS
"Wetlands are Wonderful"
Poster, Speech & Essay
Contests

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SWCD Board & Staff

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When performed on the farm, agriculture, agricultural, and farming also include the marketing and selling of agricultural products, agritourism, the storage and use of materials for agricultural purposes, packing, treating, processing, sorting, storage, and other activities performed to add value to crops, livestock, and agricultural items produced on the farm, and similar activities incident to the operation of a farm

Contact
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The Farmland Preservation Advisory Board will make recommendations for revising the current Voluntary Farmland Preservation ordinance to allow for these changes and take applications for smaller acreage farms that meet these definitions.

5th Annual Alleghany County Envirothon Competition

Teams Compete in 5th Annual Alleghany County Envirothon

Students from Alleghany County school system recently participated in the 5th annual county-wide Envirothon competition sponsored by the Alleghany Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). This program is a competitive event in which high school and middle school teams of up to five members compete in a natural resources and ecology field day. The competition covered the following resource subjects: forestry, soils, aquatics, wildlife, and current environmental issues which included such topics as: "Climate Change"; "Stormwater" and Conservation & Consumerism".

A total of 14 teams gathered at the Lions Club in Sparta to compete in the environmental education training: 4 teams from Alleghany High School, team advisor Larry Cole; 4 teams from Glade Creek School, team advisors Mary Toliver, Hope McClure, Amy Bottomley and Bobby Waddell; 3 teams from Piney Creek School, team advisor Lisa Camichos; and 3 teams from Sparta School, team advisor Cecelia Hampton; the advisors rotated through each station with their students during the morning sessions.

At the Soils station, Greg Wagoner with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) taught the students how to use a soil survey to determine which soils were suitable for growing crops. In Forestry, Russell Choate, NC Forestry Service, taught the students to identify different species of trees. In Wildlife, Mike Edwards, Stone Mountain State Park, discussed what was needed to maintain healthy habitats. In Aquatics, Jeff Matheson and Scott Robinson, New River State Park, taught students important facts about water quality and quantity. In Current Environmental Issues, Amy Lucas, Alleghany County Extension, discussed articles about climate change and conservation.

Awards were presented after testing in each category. The team receiving 1st place in the high school competition was "Rookie Rejects" from Alleghany High School; team members Colby Andrews, Lauren Edwards, Ernest Shaw and Emma Whitehead. 1st place in the middle school competition was presented to "Rabid Raccoons" from Glade Creek School; team members Leah McGrady, Jacob Simpson, Seth Hammack, Jennifer Lee and Jose Renteria.

All the teams will compete on March 29th at the McGee Educational Center in Wilkes County along with teams from twelve other counties in Area 2.

The event was organized by Soil and Water

staff Linda Hash and Janie Woodle. Local contributors include: Alleghany Farm Bureau, Carolina Farm Credit, Food Lion and Lowes Food. The county competition is an annual event which will serve as training for the regional and state competitions held in March each year.

Learn more by visiting the NC Envirothon website at:

[NC Envirothon](#)

**1st Place/High School—"Rookie Rejects"—Alleghany High School
(L—R)
Ernest Shaw-Lauren Edwards-Emma Whitehead-Colby Andrews**



**1st Place/Middle School—"Rabid Raccoons"—Glade Creek
(L—R)
Leah McGrady-Jennifer Lee-Jacob Simpson
Jose Renteria-Seth Hammack**

Alleghany SWCD Welcomes Alan Walker Area 1 ASTC FO

JB Martin, NC State Conservationist, announced during a recent leadership team meeting in Raleigh that Alan Walker has been selected as the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in the Waynesville Area.

Alan Walker stated “This is an accomplishment I share with all the SWCD and NRCS folks I have worked with and who have shepherded me during my career. The successes I have had are based on experiences and interactions with our partners, clients, other agencies and each of you and for that I am truly thankful and blessed. This is an awesome responsibility and one that I do not take lightly. The many NRCS and SWCD folks who have been a part of our partnership in the past have laid a strong foundation for us to build upon and now it is our turn to prepare the path for the future. We all share an interest in our natural resources, a passion to see them conserved, protected and utilized within their capabilities, and a calling to help others be the best

stewards of God’s creation. I have high expectations for Area 1 as we move forward to perform at the highest level in all areas and for each of you to be successful in your respective counties. When we set high expectations for ourselves and the quality of our work our clients benefit and so does the environment...We have the unique opportunity to make a lasting impact in our region and I look forward to working with each of you as we demonstrate to others why we are Area 1.”



USDA Seeking Applications in North Carolina for On-Farm Energy Initiative

North Carolina farmers and organic producers can apply for technical and financial assistance to help get an energy audit for their operation. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) is seeking applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) On-Farm Energy Initiative. Funding for the EQIP On-Farm Energy Initiative will be available soon. Now is the time for farmers to work with their local USDA Service Center to establish eligibility and apply so that their applications can be considered when funds become available.

The EQIP On-Farm Energy initiative will assist farmers in the development of Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) for individual on-farm energy audits. An AgEMP is an analysis of current farm infrastructure and management with recommendations to improve energy efficiency on the farm through implementing recommendations from on-farm energy audits. A plan can be developed for each farm enterprise, such as a livestock production system, a field crop system, and specialized non-livestock operations such as greenhouses and cold storage. This provides the farmer with cost effective ways to reduce operating costs while saving energy.

The advantages of energy conservation includes reducing air pollutants, reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, reducing dependence on petroleum based products, and slowing escalation of energy costs due to lower demand.

Under the EQIP On-Farm Energy Initiative applicants can apply for numerous conservation practices that benefit natural resources. Applicants who apply for the national initiative can also apply for conservation practices under the general EQIP program and other national initiatives.

For more information farmers should visit their local USDA Service Center today to apply for available funding for Farm Bill programs and initiatives; locations are listed on-line at <http://offices.usda.gov> or in the phone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga Counties are served by the Jefferson Service Center, which you can reach at: [Jefferson Service Center](#) at (336) 246-5461 ext. 3 or by email at david.tucker@nc.usda.gov.

For more information on this and other USDA programs please visit the following websites:

NRCS- www.nc.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA—<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>

NCASWCD Annual Meeting:

The 68th Annual Meeting of the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) was held January 8-10 in Greensboro. Newly appointed Alleghany SWCD supervisor Chris Huysman along with SWCD staff Linda Hash and Janie Woodle attended the conference. This year's theme was "Conservation in Motion" and was presided over by State Association President, Craig Frazier, supervisor from Randolph SWCD.



Sunday's events included various work sessions and board meetings, orientation for new supervisors and a quarterly meeting of the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

A memorial service held in the evening included a tribute to supervisors and staff that had past during the year.

Susie Gambill, wife of late supervisor Bobby Joe Gambill, and son Brad, attended the service to honor Bobby Joe.



Monday's general session was addressed by Commissioner Steve Troxler, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and motivational speaker Randy Frazier. Breakout sessions included training in the areas of Fiscal Management, Business Decisions and Customer Relations, Leadership, Urban District Caucus, Marketing/Partnerships & Grant Writing and Six Degrees to Legislative Success. Resource Committee meetings were held in the afternoon with the Conservation Education dinner and awards in the evening followed by auxiliary auction and DEA fundraiser.

Tuesday's morning session included a Milton Heath Lecture, "NC Wind Energy: Potential, Policies & Problems" by Dr. Dennis Scanlin, ASU. Unique projects in the Yadkin, Burke and Durham districts were showcased. The Association's business session ended in the afternoon with reports from the eight standing committees and adoption of the 2012 Program Objectives.

Tuesday evening's Banquet included: recognition of the Conservation Farm Family of the Year-the Perser Family of White Rock Farms in Anson County; induction of supervisor James Ferguson of Haywood County into the Conservation Hall of Fame; and guest speaker Randy Frazier talked about "What I have learned from 9000 years of farming". The evening closed after the Honorable Rob Wilkins installed the 2012 NCASWCD President, Donald Heath of Craven County.



Beth Pugh Farrell at NCDA&CS

A familiar face to soil and water conservation was spotted at the NCASWCD meeting. Beth Pugh Farrell, formerly of Alleghany is currently serving as administrative assistant to Dr. Richard Reich, Assistant Commissioner for Agricultural Services. In this role, she has the opportunity to assist the seven divisions and programs that are under his leadership with budgetary and human resources concerns as well as special projects for the Department. Beth graduated from NC State in 2002 with a BS in Animal Science and worked for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences as a development officer until joining NCDA&CS in 2010. Beth said, "participating in the Resource Conservation Workshop greatly influenced my decision to attend NC State; it gave me confidence that I could be in a major city and on such a large campus, and not be absolutely overwhelmed. The opportunities provided by Soil and Water through the poster and speech contests helped strengthen my confidence levels in my abilities in addition to giving me a foundation on the importance of being a good steward to our environment." Best wishes to Beth in her role at the Department.

"Wetlands are Wonderful" – 2012 Poster, Essay and Speech Contests

The North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts sponsors conservation contests at District, Area and State levels to provide students an opportunity to become aware of and share their concerns for soil and water conservation.

The Alleghany SWCD recently provided poster, essay and speech contest information and resource materials to teachers and students in the 5th–8th grades in Sparta, Piney Creek and Glade Creek schools. Participation in the contests meets certain curriculum goals & objectives required by NC Department of Public Instruction Grade Level Competencies.

The county competition is scheduled for Tuesday, February 14th; the Area 2 competition will be held March 2012.



District Calendar

District Events

February 14th—District Board Meeting ~ Pines Restaurant 7:30 am

March 13th—District Board Meeting ~ Pines Restaurant 7:30 am

Educational Events

Feb. 14th—Poster, Essay & Speech County Contest ~ Conference Room SWCD building 10 am

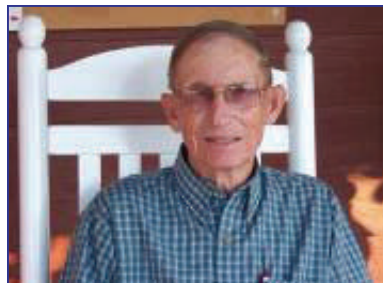
March 22nd—Area 2 Contest Night ~ Caldwell County Public Library, Lenoir 6 pm

March 29th—NW Envirothon ~ McGee Center Wilkesboro/Registration 8:15 am

District Board of Supervisors



Paul Edwards
Chairman



Jim Dixon
Vice-Chair



Terry Hall
Secretary/Treasurer

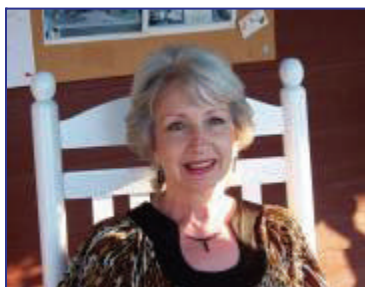


Bobby Evans
Member

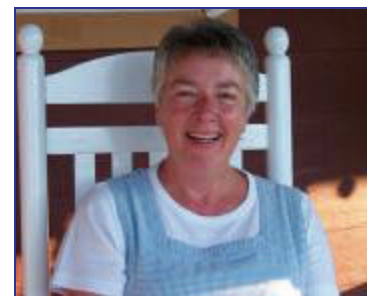


Chris Huysman
Member

Allegheny SWCD Staff

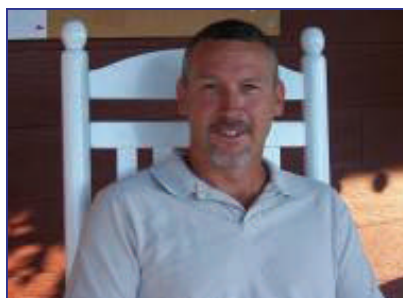


Linda Hash
Director/
Conservationist



Janie Woodle
Admin. Asst/Tech/
Education Director

David Tucker
District
Conservationist



Greg Wagoner
Soil Conservation
Technician



Our Mission Is...

...to promote the conservation of natural resources in Alleghany County through education, information, technical assistance, and available economic incentives.

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

P O Box 127 (90 S. Main St., Room 200)
Sparta, NC 28675

Visit us on the web at: Alleghany Soil & Water Conservation District

Phone: 336-372-4645 or 336-372-7777 Fax: 336-372-7402

E-mail: linda.hash@nc.nacdnet.net or janie.woodle@nc.nacdnet.net

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

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

Please contact our office for details

