



Conservation Comments



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2014

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Alleghany Soil & Water Conservation District

*“The nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself”
Franklin Delano Roosevelt*

Alleghany County Farmland Protection Plan



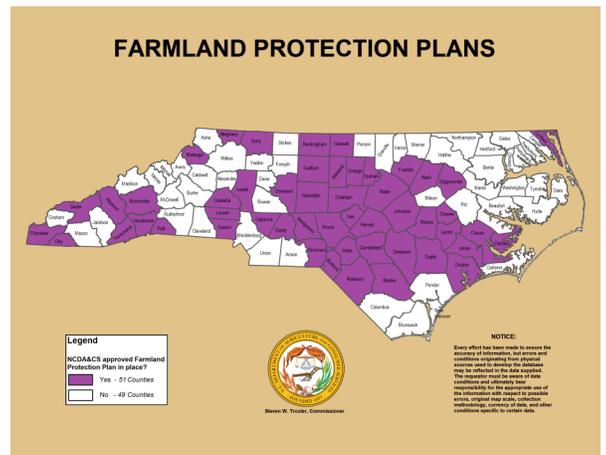
NC Agricultural Development &
Farmland Preservation
Trust Fund
NCDACS

Alleghany County Commissioners adopted the Alleghany Farmland Preservation Plan on October, 21, 2013 ; Dewitt Hardee, Director, Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFPTF), NC Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDACS), announced on November 26, 2013, that Alleghany County became the 51st county in North Carolina to have a Farmland Protection Plan in place. The development of the Plan is possible due to a grant from NCDACS ADFP Trust Fund and local matching funds. Alleghany SWCD received \$15,000 from the (ADFPTF) to assist in the effort to make family farms more profitable and viable and to protect the county’s natural resources.

The following recommendations were derived during development of the plan:

1. Endorse Alleghany County Farmland Preservation Plan as a tool to guide county programs and policies related to agriculture.
2. Advocate for Alleghany County and rural North Carolina in efforts related to agriculture and forestry at all legislative levels.
3. Expand participation in the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) program and explore an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District Program.
4. Develop a Prioritization Plan for Preservation.
5. Increase the number of acres that are under an active forest management plan.
6. Develop a mentor program for beginning farmers; educate young people about agriculture and farming as a career; and organize a Young Farmer Association.
7. Support a “Buy Local” promotion campaign.
8. Support funding for the US Highway 21 and other major road improvements.
9. Offer continuing education programs for farmers and agribusiness owners.
10. Advocate for back taxes collected from farms losing Present Use status to be set aside to help with farmland preservation programs.
11. Develop an Agricultural Advisory Board comprised of representatives of farmers, all agricultural related boards, agribusinesses, lenders, county government and agencies who work with agriculture.

(Copies of the plan are being provided to local government and agricultural related agencies.)



7th Annual Allegheny County Envirothon



Students from Allegheny County school system recently participated in the 7th Annual county-wide Envirothon competition



Presenters (L to R)

Russell Choate, NC Forest Service ~ David Tucker, USDA-NRCS
Amy Lucas, NCCES ~ Scott Robinson, New River State Park
Mike Edwards, Stone Mt. State Park

sponsored by the Allegheny 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: "Sustaining Native Bee Habitat", "Soil Health Key Points" and "Are Biotech Foods Safe to Eat?". A total of 26 teams gathered at the Lions Club in Sparta to compete in the environmental education training: 3 teams from Allegheny High School, "Gang Green", "Green Machine" and "Enviro-mentalists", team advisor Larry Cole;



1st ~ "Green Machine" ~ Allegheny High



9 teams from Glade Creek School, "Groovy Groundhogs", "Brothers of the Beard", "Environmental Awesomeness", "Pouncing Panthers", "Green Mafia", "Flower Assassins", "Las Tortugas", "Battling Bucks", and "The Four Eco-Teers", team advisors Hope McClure, Melissa Gibson and Lucinda Davis; 6 teams from Piney Creek School, "Stay Strong", "Fiery Blue Dolphins", "Titanium", "Buttered Pigs", "Swagger", and "Awesome Apples", team advisors Becky Sanders and Shelly Warnick; 8 teams from Sparta School, "Earth Heroes", "Environmasters", "Brainy Gang", "NC Nature", "Awesomeness", "Minks", "Envirothon Buddies", and "The Fox", team advisor Elaine Reales and Sherrie Hines who represented all schools at the event; advisors rotated through each station with their students during the morning sessions.



1st ~ "Las Tortugas" ~ Glade Creek

Teams Tie for 1st Place in Middle School



1st ~ "Flower Assassins" ~ Glade Creek

At the Soils station-right, David Tucker with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) teaches students how to use a soil survey to determine which soils are suitable for growing crops. At the Forestry station below, Russell Choate, NC Forestry Service, teaches students to measure board feet in a tree and identify local species of trees.



Right: Mike Edwards, Stone Mountain State Park, talks about how to maintain a healthy habitat for wildlife.



Left: In Aquatics, Scott Robinson, New River State Park, teaches students important facts about water quality and quantity. Below: Amy Lucas, 4-H Agent, discusses articles about the Emerald Ash Borer, NC Coyotes and Groundwater at Current Environmental Issues station.



Awards were presented after testing in each category. The team receiving 1st place in the high school competition was "Green Machine" from Alleghany High School; team members, Colby Andrews, Olivia Petras, Leah McGrady, and Maddie Whisnant. Two teams from Glade Creek School tied for 1st place in middle school, "Flower Assassins", team members Danielle Denton, Luis Guzman, Nathan Gandar and Avery Chandler, and "Las Tortugas", team members Jose Renteria, Jordan Roten, Hector San German, and Tristen Villarruel. All teams will compete on March 27th at the McGee Educational Center in Wilkes County along with teams from twelve other counties in Area 2.

The local competition is an annual event which will serve as training for the regional and state competitions held in March and April each year. The event was organized by Soil and Water staff Linda Hash and Janie Woodle.



NCASWCD 70th Annual Meeting

The NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts hosted its 70th Annual Meeting January 5-7, 2014, in Asheville. This meeting of conservation partners from throughout North Carolina provides an opportunity to come together and address needs of the association while providing training opportunities for district supervisors, staff, and members of the conservation partnership.

The general session opened with several guests including Commissioner of Agriculture, Steve Troxler. The keynote address was from Dean Richard Linton, NCSU on “The Food Safety Challenge and Responsive Programs at NC State”. A Milton Heath Lecture “Soil Health Farming in the 21st Century” was given by David Lamm, USDA-NRCS.



Training included concurrent sessions on: Job Approval Authority, Soil Nutrients, Legislative Advocacy, Obtaining Funding for Community Conservation, Conservation Easements and Linking Conservation Plans to Farm Bill Programs.

A memorial service was held on Sunday evening to honor supervisors from across the state who had past during the year. Elwood Davis, who had served as a supervisor for the Alleghany Soil and Water Conservation District for 34 years, was among the 17 recognized.

Several awards were presented, including Conservation Farm Family of the Year. Brush Creek Farm-Frances Huber, owner and Bobby Irwin, manager was recognized as second in the State and winner of the Mountain Region Farm Family award.



NCASWCD President, Tommy Hauser presents Conservation Farm Family award to Frances Huber, owner and Bobby Irwin, manager of Brush Creek Farm.

“The Living Soil” 2014 Poster, Essay and Speech Contests



The NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts promotes 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 through 8th grades in Sparta, Piney Creek, Glade Creek and Blue Ridge Christian School and 9th grade at Alleghany High. Participation in the contests meets certain curriculum goals and objectives required by the NC Department of Public Instruction Grade Level Competencies.

First place posters, essays, and names of speech contestants at the school level must be submitted to the Soil and Water office by January 31, 2014.

The county competition is scheduled for Tuesday, February 11, 2014, in the conference room of the Alleghany County Administration building.

Contests rules may be accessed through the Division of Soil and Water Conservation’s homepage at this link: http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/educational/documents/2013-2014_contest_handbook.pdf

(Note, not all contests are offered in all counties. Local deadlines provided by SWCD staff will apply.)

Upcoming Educational Events:

County Speech, Essay & Poster Contests-February 11th/10:00 am-County Admin Bldg.

Area 2 Speech, Essay & Poster Contests-March 20th/6:00 pm-Caldwell County Library

NW Envirothon Competition-March 27th/McGee Center in Wilkes

State Envirothon Competition-April 25-26th/Burlington

Resource Conservation Workshop-June/NCSU (Information will be sent to AHS in April)

2014 County Envirothon Competition-October

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) and other agencies to carry out these responsibilities. We work with local government, citizens and land owners to plan and direct programs for the conservation, development and management of our natural resources. We also provide environmental educational programs for the youth of Alleghany County.

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



Front: Rob Baldwin, Regional Coordinator, Janie Woodle, Education Director, Linda Hash, Director, Paul Edwards, Board Chair; Back: David Tucker, NRCS, Bobby Evans, Terry Hall, Chris Huysman and Jim Dixon-District Board Supervisors

ALLEGHANY SWCD

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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