

The Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

The District Current

Volume 47, Issue 2 Summer 2017



The Henderson County Soil and Water Conservation District has been busy this spring and we are making plans now for the Fall!

Inside this issue, you will find articles about our recent projects as well as information about services that we offer and how you can benefit. Please take a moment to read this newsletter and let us know how we can be of service to you!

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Kids in the Creek with Rugby Middle School

The Henderson County Soil and Water Conservation District would like to thank the 12 partner organizations and various community members that volunteered their time to make Kids in the Creek with Rugby Middle School a success this year.

On April 11th-13th, thirteen partner organizations, along with community volunteers, hosted 285 eighth-graders from Rugby Middle School at Mills River Town Park to learn more about water quality. Students spent the days attending six sessions related to water quality. Students had hands-on opportunities to test the chemical parameters of the river, survey the stream and collect aquatic life, properly identify macroinvertebrates found in the river, test soil samples, learn more about the process of water filtration for drinking water, and even play a game where students were able to “be” aquatic life.

Great weather and a great host site allowed students to reinforce concepts discussed in the classroom. This event could not have been a success without the volunteer efforts of the Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District, NC Wildlife Commission, City of Hendersonville, City of Asheville, Mills River Parks and Recreation, MountainTrue, Mills River Partnership, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Rugby Middle School, RiverLink, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, Mountain Horticulture Research Station and various community members who gave their time for this event.

For more information on introducing water quality activities into your classroom, please contact the Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District at 828-697-4949 or any of our partner organizations listed above!



Students enjoyed the hands-on activities during Kids in the Creek

Soil Health Field Day was a Success

Thanks to a generous grant administered by the NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation with funds from the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, a Soil Health Field Day, which included expert speakers and a multi-species cover crop demonstration, was held on April 27, 2017 at Whitaker Farms in Mills River. Over 20 participants learned about the science behind soil health and the tremendous value cover crops give to the soil. David Lamm, the USDA-NRCS, National Soil Health Team Leader and Dr. Greg Hoyt, retired Professor and Extension Specialist in Soil Management and Environmental Quality, led the interactive discussions and demonstrations. Philip Whitaker generously hosted the event and allowed attendees to view his demonstration plots which include a mixture of crimson clover, cereal rye, Austrian winter peas, and tillage radishes.

Cover crops can be a single species or a multi-species mixture of annual crops grown after the cash crop has been harvested to provide erosion control and soil improvement. The use of a cover crop reduces erosion, winter weeds, and soil crusting and improves soil quality by adding organic matter, improving infiltration, aeration and tilth, and sequestering carbon/nutrients. By limiting soil erosion, adjacent surface waters, such as rivers and streams, will see a reduction in sedimentation and pollution from dissolved and sediment-attached substances.

To learn how to incorporate the use of cover crops to improve your soil's health, contact the Henderson County Soil and Water Conservation District at (828) 697-4949.



David Lamm shared a wealth of knowledge



What a great looking cover crop!

Soil and Water Provides Free Educational Lessons for Teachers!



The Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District provides **FREE educational lessons** to assist classroom teachers in providing dynamic education for their students!

We come to you on your classroom schedule. This means no need for fundraising, bus scheduling, or field trip permission forms. Lessons are typically 45-55 minutes long, but can be tailored for your needs.

Please contact us today to schedule your classes! We would be happy to work with you to create a plan to fit your classroom needs!

Lessons are created to help you meet the NC Essential Standards. This year we are focusing on the theme “Water...The Cycle of Life”. Water Cycle lessons **meet NC Essential Standards 5.P.2 and 5.P.2.1—Water Cycle**.

Not a 5th grade teacher? Not a problem! We can teach about Soil and Water on **all grade levels, including mixed grades and special populations**. Just let us know your needs!

Did you know we have contests? We participate in the NC Soil & Water Contests, including Poster, Speech and Essay contests on a particular theme each year. This gives students an opportunity to explore soil and water conservation through art, writing and public speaking. Let us know if you are interested in enhancing these skills for your students! Contest themes are: “Water...The Cycle of Life” (2017-2018), “The Living Soil” (2018-2019), and “Wetlands are Wonderful” (2019-2020).

Interested for next year but ready for summer? Email us with the date you want us to check in with you next fall. We’ll email you then and we’ll get you on the schedule! We look forward to hearing from you soon! Please call (828) 697-4949 or email april.hoyt@nc.usda.gov for more information.

Conservation Programs Available Program Year 2018

Sign Up Period: July 3, 2017 – September 29, 2017

The Henderson County Soil and Water Conservation District (HCSWCD) is currently accepting applications for North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program (NCACSP), Agriculture Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP) and Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP). These programs are voluntary and are funded through the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Division of Soil & Water Conservation (NCDA&CS – SW) and administered through the HCSWCD to fund the installation of various Best Management Practices (BMP's) to improve water quality.

These programs can provide technical assistance and help pay a portion of the costs for installation of accepted water quality improving practices. To be eligible for either program, there must be an existing water quality problem. The BMP's must be designed by the HCSWCD, be maintained for up to 10 years, completed after a signed contract is approved and meet our specifications.

Whether you live on a farm or in a neighborhood, we may be able to help you with erosion, agrichemical, and/or animal waste problems on your property. Here are a few of the BMP's that may qualify:

- Cropland Conversion
- Stock Trail
- Livestock Exclusion (fencing)
- Ag Road Stabilization
- Stream Stabilization
- No-till vegetables
- Stream Crossings
- Watering Tanks
- Diversions/Grassed Waterways
- Feed Pads
- Riparian Buffers
- Abandoned Well Closure
- Critical Area Planting
- Bio-retention Area
- Stream Restoration/Protection
- Large Cisterns
- Pet Waste Receptacles
- Backyard Wetland/Rain Garden
- Agrichemical Handling/Mixing Facilities and Backflow Prevention

If you have any questions or think your water quality problem might qualify for assistance, call Jonathan Wallin, April Hoyt or Rachel Smith at the Henderson County Soil and Water Conservation District (828) 697-4949.

Visit <http://www.nacgr.gov/sw/> for in depth details on these programs.



Financial Services Provided in Henderson County in 2017

	Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)	Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP)	Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP)
Applications/Contracts Funded	6	7	5
Total Amount Funded	\$265,000	\$111,986	\$117,500
Total Funds Provided in Henderson County in 2017: \$494,486			

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