The Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District is now accepting applications for the North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program (NCACSP). The NCACSP is a voluntary program administered through the HCSWCD to fund the installation of various Best Management Practices (BMP’s) for water quality improvement. The NCACSP pays up to 75% of the cost for installation of the BMP.

Examples of BMPs:

- AgriChemical Handling Facility
- Chemigation/Fertigation Backflow Prevention Systems
- Feed/Waste Storage Systems
- Livestock Exclusion (fencing)
- Watering Tanks
- Stock Trails
- Cropland Conversion

I would like to apply for the Ag Cost Share Program. Call Jonathan Wallin at 697-4949 or stop by the office for an application today!
Historically, the Mills River had been one of the most pristine rivers in the region. The State’s water quality monitoring regularly gave it its highest rating of “Excellent”. In the 1990’s the rating in the lower Mills River began to drop, plummeting in 1998 to the State’s lowest rating, “Poor”. This is when community leaders began the Mills River Partnership to try and reverse this decline.

Since that beginning we have worked with over 30 land owners, all on a voluntary basis, spending approximately $1.2 million worth of grant money to implement projects that would improve water quality.

Good news! The river’s on the rebound. For now. The latest monitoring has resulted in “Good” ratings. We have recently been honored by the US EPA for our good work. It is a rare occurrence for a watershed organization to see such measurable improvements from their projects. So yes, it’s working. Read the Success Story on the EPA website at http://www.epa.gov/nps/Success319/.

By Shaun Moore, Mills River Watershed Project Coordinator

Helping People Help the Land

The USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) motto is “Helping People Help the Land”. Historically this has been done by providing conservation planning assistance via a conservation plan written for a specific piece of land. The plan’s goal is to lessen the impact to natural resources, such as soil and water, being affected by agricultural activities. “Helping people help the land”.

NRCS has several programs available to assist landowners with conservation on their land. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) combines conservation planning assistance with financial assistance. This financial assistance helps pay part of the cost of implementing the recommendations outlined in the conservation plan. An example of this is if a farmer wanted to improve the efficiency of his grazing operation; the conservation plan may call for dividing a pasture with a fence and installing water tanks to supply the livestock with fresh water. NRCS would reimburse the farmer some of the cost of installing the fence and water tanks. Other examples that the EQIP program can assist farmers with are improving access roads to reduce erosion, construction of agrichemical handling facilities to reduce pesticide transport to water sources, purchase and use of more efficient pesticide sprayers, and repairing eroding stream banks.

The sign up for this years (Fiscal year 2007) EQIP program will be from November 15th until January 15th. If you have a resource concern on agriculture land please consider signing up for the EQIP program. Please call Dan Rosenberg at 697-4949 to discuss how to sign up for this program.

To receive a copy (while supply lasts) call us with your contact information:

- Name
- Address
- Phone
- E-mail address
- Acreage

Now Available
“Managing Your Woodlands”:
A Guide for Southern Appalachian Landowners
A FREE handbook for private forest landowners who are interested in a sound management system and would like to protect the long-term health and productivity of their forest. 828-697-4949

So, is all this work...working?
A Day on the Farm . . . Farm City Day 2006

With a little bit of luck keeping threatening storm clouds away, Farm City Day 2006 turned out to be a dry day of fun for the whole family. The chilly temperatures in the morning didn’t keep visitors away from visiting our display booth or keep children from playing in our CORN BOX.

In addition to information about the EQIP program, NC Ag Cost Share program and erosion control, this year our booth featured information on “Invasive Species.” Some of the plants highlighted were kudzu, tree-of-heaven, autumn olive, European privet, multiflora rose, English ivy and Chinese silvergrass. We had posters on display, actual field-specimens and an informative booklet on Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests. We were even able to entice a few willing participants into a game of “identify that plant”!

Our Special Thanks to the COMMUNITY MILLS INC for donating the 500 pounds of golden yellow field corn to fill the box.

Jennifer Gough, an Americorps member, will be serving with us through July 27, 2007. Americorp gives people the opportunity to volunteer in a community for one year. It is similar to Peace Corp. The goal of the year’s service is “to meet the community’s needs in education, the environment, and public safety.”

Jennifer will be serving through Project Conserve developed by the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy in Hendersonville as “a way for individuals to serve the conservation needs of western North Carolina.”

Jennifer received an environmental studies degree from Elon University in May, 2005. She has a love for the outdoors and is committed to protecting the environment.

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A Warm Welcome To
Jennifer Gough, Americorps Member
Please Patronize Our Conservation Minded Sponsors

Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Assistance on: Erosion & Sediment Control, Conservation Planning, Soils Information, Drainage, Pasture Management, etc.

Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District
61 Triple Springs Road
Hendersonville, NC 28792

Editor - Kim McDonald