DISTRICT OFFERS WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDS

By Jonathan Wallin

Nonpoint source pollution has been identified as the primary source of degradation of rivers and streams in North Carolina. Nonpoint source pollution involves pollutants that enter bodies of water over large areas rather than being concentrated at a single point of entry. The Henderson County Soil and Water Conservation District offers cost share funding to address agriculture’s contribution to the nonpoint source water pollution problem in Henderson County.

Henderson County SWCD encourages voluntary participation by the agricultural community to address water quality problems. A financial incentive is provided through the North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program (NCACSP) for the design and installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address these water quality problems.

The Cost Share Program was begun in 1983 to address the nonpoint source water quality problems in NC. This program offers participating farmers 75% of a predetermined average cost for the installation of BMPs. The remaining 25 percent of the cost is paid by the farmer directly or through in-kind contributions, such as use of their own equipment to complete the work needed.

Some of the more common BMPs installed in Henderson County using NCACSP Funds include: agrichemical handling facilities, chemigation/fertigation backflow prevention systems, SmartSpray technology, livestock exclusion (fencing), watering tanks, stock trails, cropland conversion, and streambank stabilization.

See Water Quality, page 2

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE EXAMPLES:

- Agrichemical handling facilities
- Chemigation/fertigation backflow prevention systems
- Feed/waste storage structures
- SmartSpray technology
- Livestock exclusion
- Watering tanks
- Stock trails
- Cropland conversion
- Streambank stabilization

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- BROKAW JOINS SWCD STAFF
- SPONSORS
- TREE SALE ORDER FORM
- SWCD TAKING APPS FOR NON-AG. SITES
- AG. PRESERVATION PLAN SEeks INPUT
- TREE SEEDLING SALE BEGINS

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Wayne Carland, Treasurer
Daniel McConnell, Secretary
Dr. Greg Hoyt, Member

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In December, the Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District welcomed Laurie Brokaw as the new District Technician and Education Coordinator. She takes the place of Cary Pace, who retired from the position in July 2008.

“I’m looking forward to learning about some of the farming that is different from Buncombe County, such as apple growing,” Brokaw said.

Brokaw, who worked for the Buncombe County Soil & Water Conservation District for six years, is no stranger to Henderson County – she has lived here for 12 years. Born in Easton, PA, Laurie earned a degree in Geology, with minors in Earth Science and English, at Eastern Michigan University. She received her teacher certification from Chapman University in California.

Camping, kayaking, traveling and cooking are some of Laurie’s favorite hobbies, as well as riding motorcycles (she has a Honda Shadow Aero 750) with her husband, John.

“We are very pleased to have Laurie joining our team,” said Jonathan Wallin, District Director. “Her knowledge and previous experience will be an asset implementing conservation and conservation awareness in Henderson County.”

Please stop by the office and meet Laurie!

WATER QUALITY
Continued from Page 1
SWCD administers the Cost Share Program in Henderson County. Any farmer can apply for this program as long as it can be shown that water quality will be improved by using the funds provided. Applications are taken throughout the year and are ranked and reviewed monthly by the SWCD Board based on water quality improvements. The SWCD Board consists of five members (three elected and two appointed) who are residents of Henderson County. Members of the board are: Andrew Brannon, Wayne Carland, Greg Hoyt, Theron Maybin and Danny McConnell.

PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR CONSERVATION-MINDED SPONSORS
Input Needed for Ag Preservation Plan

By John Bonham, special to The District Current

Henderson County has begun developing an Agriculture Preservation Plan. The plan is part of a series of voluntary programs defined by state statute and promoted by the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The goals of the programs are to protect farmland from conversion and strengthen the agricultural industry across the state.

Henderson County’s Agricultural Advisory Board received a grant from the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to prepare the plan, and is overseeing the plan’s development. The plan is being developed by John Bonham of the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy with support from Jonathan Wallin of the SWCD and Marvin Owings of Henderson County Cooperative Extension. The plan will serve as a guidance document for county staff, elected officials, industry groups, individual farmers, and civic organizations. The plan will contain an inventory of the county’s agricultural resources including farmland, agri-businesses and markets; and will describe the industry’s benefits to the county. It will describe the threats and challenges to the industry as well as strengths and opportunities. From the challenges and opportunities a set of objectives and actions will be developed that officials, staff and others can use to preserve farmland and promote commerce.

To develop the plan, Bonham is soliciting input from individual farmers, agri-business operators, and others with an interest in the related issues. In February, the county will sponsor a series of public meetings to discuss the plan and gather input. Farm operators and farmland owners will be the target audience of the meetings, but other proponents and opponents of farming will be welcome. Dates, times and locations are not yet determined but will be publicized.

For more information please contact John Bonham at 697-5777 or john@carolinamountain.org.

HCSWCD Accepting Non-Ag CCAP Applications

By Shaun Moore

The Henderson County Soil and Water’s Conservation District is now accepting applications for the NC Community Conservation Assistance Program. CCAP is a voluntary program administered through the Henderson County SWCD to fund installation of various Best Management Practices (BMPs) on non-agriculture sites for water quality improvement.

As NC’s land use is changing and rapidly becoming more urbanized, CCAP can educate landowners on water quality and storm water management, as well as retrofit practices to treat polluted storm water runoff and ultimately improve the water quality of our state’s waterways.

All privately- and publically-owned lands are eligible for the program, including homeowners, businesses, schools, parks, churches and community groups.

Eligible BMPs are: bio-retention areas, backyard wetland, small scale stream restoration, backyard rain garden, diversions, cisterns, grassed swales, storm water wetlands, riparian buffers, pet waste receptacles, critical area planting, abandoned well closures and stream bank and shoreline protection.

There must be an existing water quality problem to qualify for the program. BMPs must be designed by HCSWCD and maintained for 10 years. For more information, call or email Shaun Moore at (828) 697-4949 shaun.moore@nc.nacdnet.net. Learn more at www.hendersoncountync.org/soil/
This year’s annual Tree Seedling Sale will take place Feb. 28, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station on Old Fanning Bridge Road near the Asheville Airport.

Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District has been selling seedlings at near-cost prices as a public service for more than twenty years. This year, Soil & Water expects to sell almost 10,000 pine and hardwood seedlings. These trees may be used as erosion control, stream bank stabilization and habitat for wildlife, as well as for esthetic purposes. Some species also produce fruits or nuts that are edible for humans and wildlife.

Soil & Water staff are taking orders now at the office off Frances Road in Hendersonville by fax, mail or phone, on a first-come, first-served basis. The ordering period will end Thursday, Feb. 26.

This sale is a one day only event. Seedlings must be picked up Feb. 28 at the Research Station. Staff will not be reachable by phone on the day of the sale.

To order, call HCSWCD at 828.697.4949, or fax to 828.693.5832.

Seedling order form inside!