

# Soil & Water e-Sources

DIVISION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

vol. I, Summer 2006

## Stateside Statewide

by Manly Wilder



*This is the first edition of Soil & Water e-Sources, what I hope will be a fruitful means of communicating between the Division of Soil and Water Conservation and district supervisors, their staff, and our conservation partners. Our aim is sharing about the activities and events important to the work of conservation districts or anyone whose business it is to help those districts manage soil and water resources. I hope you'll find this newsletter useful, and I always welcome any suggestions that might make it even more so.*

### *On the hill*

Leaders of the N.C. Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts made congressional visits in Washington, D.C. during a National Association of Conservation Districts legislative conference in March. Including among the NCASWCD representatives were Don Rawls, Talmadge Layton, Franklin Williams, Sam Davis, James Ferguson, and John Finch. There was an excellent reception by all offices, but because of the federal deficit, war effort, and other factors, our best hope is that federal funds for district conservation programs will be maintained at current levels. We also had an opportunity to attend a breakfast and listen to a discussion on the 2007 farm bill. We don't expect much activity on this until next Spring.

### *Division dollars*

DSWC's proposed budget was submitted to senior administration within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and has gone from there to the governor's office. We received excellent support from DENR, especially for increases in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the agriculture cost share program. The governor's state budget proposal will probably not be released until the time the General Assembly convenes for the short session starting May 9.

### *Retreat!*

The division had a two-day staff retreat in March. Dempsey Benton, deputy secretary of DENR, opened the gathering, which included all DSWC staff. As a result of employee recommendations, groups have been established to work on strategic planning, communication, training, and recognition. Our objective is to have plans in place by the beginning of the fiscal year.

### *Commission work*

Jeff Turlington, from Harnett County, was appointed chairman of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, replacing James Ferguson. Jeff is a supervisor for Harnett SWCD, a past president of the N.C. Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (NCASWCD), and is a former member of the commission. He is a partner in Turlington Farms and tends large acreages of tobacco and cotton. Two other new members of the commission are Manly West from Currituck County and Ned Hudson of Cabarrus County. We welcome them to the SWCC and look forward to the leadership they bring to conservation activities in North Carolina.

## **Districtly Speaking**

*by Lynn Sprague, District Operations*



### *Events are us*

The District Programs Section assists the N.C. Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts with many activities. For example, plans are underway for the 2006 Conservation Awareness Day, May 31. This year the lunch will feature a “down east” fish fry on Halifax Mall across from the General Assembly building. We expect about 400 guests and hope to have every soil and water conservation district represented.

The week before, on May 24, there’s a community conservation workshop at Tanglewood Park. A major effort has been made this year to obtain grant funds for a community conservation assistance program.

Rutherford SWCD is hosting the Conservation Farm Family Celebration, June 2 at the Tim and Nell Bovender farm. This farm has been in the Bovender family since 1760. The recent conservation work there utilizes USDA farm bill programs, state ag cost share programs, and additional funding from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund.

A forth major Association activity this summer is the National Association of Conservation Districts Southeast Regional Meeting, August 27 – 29 at the Grove Park Inn, Asheville. This is a great opportunity for district representatives in North Carolina to visit with other conservation leaders from the southeast, plus hear from national leaders as well.

### *An educated crowd*

Many of the Association’s education activities are a team effort for the conservation partnership. Envirothon wrapped up this year with the state competition at Cedarock Park in Burlington. And plans are well underway for North Carolina to host the national Envirothon in 2009.

Applications are being received for the Resource Conservation Workshop (RCW), June 25 – 30 at N.C. State University. More than 90 high school students are expected to attend. It’s encouraging when I see applicants for conservation jobs note that they’ve participated in Envirothon and RCW.

For professional training, the District Employees Association and the District Programs Section are planning the District Employees Workshop, August 14 – 17 in Southern Pines. The planning team has developed a solid agenda of technical and program training.

### *Follow the leaders*

Over 200 district supervisor positions open up in North Carolina this year, either for election or reappointment. Finding and retaining good leaders is essential as we help build district capabilities. Local soil and water conservation districts have a strong history of getting conservation practices on the ground. We've told others we are leaders in conservation who understand the value of working lands, and they're listening. Through the efforts of NCASWCD, we've demonstrated the importance of private lands in our state's conservation strategy. North Carolina is experiencing tremendous change in the way agricultural landowners do business in the context of an intense building boom. We have an opportunity to address these changes, build capacity, and continue even stronger leadership for conservation. The time is now to utilize the local soil and water conservation district's proven track record to help manage North Carolina's private working lands for the future.

## **BMPs and Beyond**

by David Williams, NPS Programs



### *Share it with me*

The Soil and Water Conservation Commission approved several changes to the agriculture cost share program at its March meeting. They include:

- an incentive practice for cover crops with payment at \$25 per acre per year (effective program-year 2007);
- gasification as an alternative mortality management option (effective immediately);
- a policy providing for renovation of an expired best management practice.

The Commission also emphasized that districts must cancel any contract when at least one third of the contracted work is not completed within 12 months of the final approval date, or within 18 months if the district approves a six month extension.

Be sure to mark these ACSP deadlines on your calendar

<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Cost Share Item</b>
<b>May 26</b>	<b>4th quarter Technical Assistance Bills to Tonyia Neal-Miller</b>
<b>June 1</b>	<b>2007 Strategy Plans to the division office</b>
<b>June 7</b>	<b>2006 contracts to the division office (by 5 p.m.)</b>
<b>June 30</b>	<b>Requests for Payment for 2004 contracts and extended 2003 contracts</b>
<b>June 30</b>	<b>Extension requests for 2004 contracts</b>
<b>July 1</b>	<b>Spot check reports to the division office</b>

### *CREPing change*

DSWC has already conducted training on anticipated changes in CREP. The changes (still awaiting final approval by USDA) are designed to ensure that each enrollment provides significant water quality benefits while making permanent easements a more appealing option for landowners. (The current goal is that half of all easements be permanent.) The division and its federal partners expect to offer a second round of training following final USDA approval.

Tar River Land Conservancy and DSWC are partners in a pilot project providing education, outreach, and technical support towards CREP in Person, Granville, Vance, Warren, Halifax, Franklin, Nash, and Edgecombe counties. We'll have more information on this project in upcoming CREP training sessions and in *Soil & Water e-Sources*.

Also of note, Natalie Jones was recently selected as CREP manager, replacing Tom Potter, who retired in March. Natalie was previously the division's watershed project coordinator and has also been a technician with Pitt SWCD.

### *Granting clean water*

May 15 is the deadline for EPA 319 grant applications, and June 1 the deadline for Clean Water Management Trust Fund grants. Applicants may contact Julie Henshaw at 919-715-6430 or [julie.henshaw@ncmail.net](mailto:julie.henshaw@ncmail.net).

## **Technicalities**

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*by Vernon Cox, Technical Services*

### *The scoop on poop*

The state Environmental Management Commission will soon decide on the so-called "2T" rules, a newly proposed section of the state's .0200 rules governing non-discharge systems for animal waste disposal. The changes are expected to be finalized in May, with effective dates set for fall or early winter.

The 2T rules won't effect a significant change in regulation. Facilities operating below threshold population numbers will continue to be deemed permitted. And most facilities currently permitted can acquire coverage under a general state permit. The only facilities required to obtain a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit will be those with documented discharges. Dry litter poultry operations will not need NPDES permits under the new rules because none has ever had a documented discharge.

The most significant rule changes for agriculture apply to manure haulers. Those transporting more than 10 tons of waste must register with the Division of Water Quality, keep land application records, and also submit an annual report to DWQ. (We have reason to believe the threshold for manure haulers may rise to 100 tons in the final rule.) The annual reports from those hauling more than 750 tons must also include data on application rates, waste analysis, and cover crops.

### *Waste inspection pilot*

The General Assembly extended the pilot program for animal waste inspections to September 2007 and added Pender to the existing pilot counties of Brunswick, Columbus, and Jones, bringing the number of operations covered to 169. The program requires DSWC to perform both routine review and the compliance inspection, but DWQ retains its enforcement authority and may conduct additional compliance inspections at any time.

### *Lid on lagoons*

Our section continues its work with districts closing waste lagoons under the feedlot buyout program in eastern floodplains. By the end of May, we expect to finish closing nine lagoons on four farms in Duplin, Onslow, Perquimans, and Washington counties. We owe thanks to the participating districts and to our own engineer, Carl Dunn, for the success of these projects.

### *New faces*

Technical Services welcomes several new faces to its ranks.

They include:

**Will Burke,**  
**Anthony Dial**  
**John Hunt**  
**Cindy Safrit**

You may soon encounter them out assisting your district.



Division of Soil and Water Conservation

Manly Wilder, Director



North Carolina Department Of Environment And Natural Resources

William G. Ross Jr., Secretary

State of North Carolina

Michael F. Easley, Governor