



### Prince William Environmental Excellence Foundation

## Battlefield High School Riparian Buffer Project

In January of 2013, the Prince William Environmental Excellence Foundation (PWEFF) received a \$5,000.00 Eco-skies Grant from United Airlines for a riparian buffer planting project. The project took place on Catharpin Creek at Battlefield High School (BHS) in Gainesville, Virginia. PWEFF, a 501(c)(3) foundation established for education in the field of environmental science and conservation of natural resources in Prince William County (PWC), is associated with Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District.

To start the project, United Airlines employees and friends came out on a Saturday in October 2013 for 4 hours to prepare the site for the plantings. A few days later, all of Mrs. Thumser's Earth Science classes came out to plant a total of 136 native bushes, trees, and herbaceous plants in the area next to the stream. To complete the project, in April 2014, Mrs. Thumser's Earth

Science classes will return to plant more native meadow plants in the sanitation utilities easement section of the riparian buffer, and an educational sign explaining this riparian buffer project will be erected near the stream at the high school. In addition to improving water quality in Catharpin Creek, the newly planted buffer area will be used by BHS students for natural resource education. This project may also be used as a template for other PWC high schools with streams on their school property.



The Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, veteran status, national origin, disability, or political affiliation.

If you would like to be removed from the newsletter mailing list or would prefer to receive it by e-mail, call 571-379-7514, or email [pwsacd@pwsacd.org](mailto:pwsacd@pwsacd.org).

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## Conservation InFARMatIon

The mission of the Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District is to provide leadership in the conservation of soil, water, and related resources to all Prince William County citizens, through technical assistance information and education.

### In This Issue:

- Alternative/  
Small Acreage  
Farming Series  
*Pages 1*
- Youth  
Conservation  
Camp  
*Page 1*
- Pasture Walk!  
*Page 1*
- The Exposé on  
Fill Dirt  
*Page 2*
- Adopt-A-  
Stream (AAS)  
*Page 3*
- Livestock  
Exclusion  
Program: Cost-  
Share Rate  
Now 100%!  
*Page 3*
- Ed Dandar,  
Ducks  
Unlimited 2013  
Conservationist  
of the Year  
*Page 3*
- Battlefield High  
School  
Riparian Buffer  
Project  
*Page 4*



Cotton Patch Goose

Dexter cattle, Cotton Patch geese, and Bourbon Red turkeys. Several landowners are practicing sustainable and/or organic farming methods as well. While some of these landowners are farming specifically for immediate family use, many are selling their products to meet growing demands for local, sustainable, organic, non-traditional, and heritage foods.



Hops

These residents are actualizing a growing national trend here in Prince William County. Economists and agricultural experts from around the U.S. are highlighting some alarming developments within the agriculture industry. These developments include the aging of the current farming population, steep barriers in place for would-be young farmers who cannot afford land for traditional agriculture, and a looming shortage of migrant workers (Johnson 2012, NYT). Alternative/small acreage farming offers a grassroots response to some of these trends, as well as providing benefits within their communities. One benefit is an increase in food diversity, which can have implications for food security in the long run. These farms have flexibility and a potential for efficiency and environmentally friendly practices, helping to diversify and protect soil and water resources.

Over the next few months, we'll be offering **workshops** for new farmers and farmers interested in changing or expanding their current operation. These workshops will focus on the natural resource concerns related to these types of operations. They will be held on Friday afternoons at Windy Knoll Farm in Nokesville on **Sept. 26, Oct. 24, and Nov. 14**. Stay tuned for further information!

### \*YOUTH CONSERVATION CAMP JULY 13-19, 2014 at Virginia Tech

Two scholarships (\$500.00 value each) are now available to attend Youth Conservation Camp (Grades 9 - 12) at Virginia Tech. If selected for this scholarship, you pay only \$50.00 for the entire week!

\*Completed applications are due on **Thursday, April 24, 2014.**



\*Please Visit: [www.pwsacd.org/news-events](http://www.pwsacd.org/news-events) for information and application.

### \*Pasture Walk!

**Friday, May 16th from  
2-5pm at the**

**Model Horse Farm in Gainesville, VA**  
Agenda: weed/grass identification, a tour of the farm, pasture advice from specialists, etc. Please see [www.pwsacd.org](http://www.pwsacd.org) for more info.





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If you would like to join our **mailing list**, e-mail [pwsacd@pwsacd.org](mailto:pwsacd@pwsacd.org), or visit our website at [www.pwsacd.org](http://www.pwsacd.org) (left hand column). Future newsletters may only be delivered electronically to save paper and be more environmentally conservative.

For our events calendar and board meeting dates visit: [www.pwsacd.org/calendar.html](http://www.pwsacd.org/calendar.html) (board meetings are open to the public).

*PWSACD is a non-regulatory agency funded by Prince William County Public Works and Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.*



**The Exposé on Fill Dirt**



In November, the Prince William County Board of Supervisors approved a zoning amendment that affects agriculturally zoned properties. This zoning amendment requires a special use permit for storage or disposal of nonagricultural excavation material (fill dirt) on A-1 zoned properties. This is only if the material transported to the property exceeds 15 deliveries on any day or 300 deliveries in a year. The amendment language also defines nonagricultural excavation material as only rock and soil not generated on the farm.

The Prince William SWCD discourages the disposal of nonagricultural excavation material on cropland, hayland, or pastureland. The material is generally of poor quality and lacks the structure, organic matter, and nutrients needed to successfully establish grass or crops. Our experience has been that it is a long and expensive process to overcome these obstacles and convert this fill material into a productive soil.

If you do accept nonagricultural fill material on your property, we suggest that you do not bury your top soil in the process. The top soil and native subsoil should be separately stripped and stockpiled before fill material is brought to the site. The stockpiled subsoil and topsoil should then be spread back on top of the fill material in the correct order. The fill material, subsoil, and topsoil all need to be compacted as they are put back into the soil profile. All this excavation requires that appropriate erosion and sediment controls are in place until the site is stabilized with vegetation. Excavation or spreading of fill material is prohibited in a resource protection area or wetland without the appropriate permits from Prince William County, Virginia DEQ, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Contact the Prince William County Zoning office at (703) 792-8154 or [zoning@pwcgov.org](mailto:zoning@pwcgov.org) if you have further questions on the ordinance. If you need technical assistance identifying resource protection areas and other sensitive sites on



your property, appropriate erosion and sediment controls, or reestablishing vegetation on areas of fill material, contact the District office at (571) 379-7514 or [pwsacd@pwsacd.org](mailto:pwsacd@pwsacd.org).



*Runoff from fill dirt eventually gets into our waterways. This extra sedimentation clogs the lungs of aquatic organisms and prevents sunlight from reaching aquatic plants, making survival nearly impossible.*

**Adopt-A-Stream (AAS)**

Would you like to volunteer to help clean up a stream? Stream cleanups involve volunteers walking along a stream or



paddling a stream channel while collecting trash. Cleanup efforts foster a sense of community and are an effective way to improve habitat, water quality, and aesthetics.

If you would like to volunteer to help clean up a stream, please contact the AAS coordinator, [kellyjimenez@pwsacd.org](mailto:kellyjimenez@pwsacd.org), (571) 379-7415 or visit [www.pwsacd.org](http://www.pwsacd.org).

**Livestock Exclusion Program: Cost-Share Rate Now 100%!**

For a limited time, we are able to provide up to 100% funding to cover the cost of installing practices needed to facilitate the exclusion of livestock to streams, wetlands, and other surface waters. These practices include:

- fencing
- watering systems
- and stream crossings



This program is only being offered through the end of June 2015.

Contact the District office at (571) 379-7514 for more information on the program and how to enroll.

**Ed Dandar , Ducks Unlimited 2013 Conservationist of the Year**



The Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District (PWSWCD) nominated Ed Dandar, as a member of Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition (PWTSC), for the 2013 Ducks Unlimited Conservationist of the Year Award.

Since 2010, Ed has organized a PWTSC annual spring cleanup of the Upper Occoquan River. He coordinates with 15 -20 organizations to clean more than 20 miles of river. Since the first cleanup, a total of 11.5 tons of trash have been removed from the Occoquan River by 392 volunteers. As a member of PWTSC, Ed was also instrumental in helping establish a public put-in/take-out site for kayaks and canoes on the Occoquan River just below Lake Jackson Dam. He understands that getting more people out on the river helps raise their awareness of water quality issues, which also increases their level of stewardship toward our environment. To this day, Ed continues to be dedicated to the Lake Jackson Dam site, ensuring that the site is kept clean and the trail down to the river is well maintained. He is currently in the process of organizing the 2014 Upper Occoquan River cleanup – his 5th year of coordinating this massive effort.



*From left to right: Chip Rohr (Ducks Unlimited), Ed Dandar, and Nicole Ethier (PWSWCD)*

In addition, Ed serves on the Trails & Blueways (streams) Council – an advisory council established by the Prince William Board of County Supervisors (BOCS). This council advises the Parks and Recreation Department and the BOCS in the development of a County-wide trails and blueways system in PWC to get better access for citizens to enjoy and appreciate nature.

Ed also practices conservation on his horse farm in Nokesville. Ed has maintained a voluntary conservation plan for his horse property for many years. He keeps the plan updated and willingly follows the conservation practices recommended in the plan.

The PWSWCD feels that Ed Dandar has earned this annual award from Ducks Unlimited, and we are proud of his conservation efforts.