

Inspiring Personal Responsibility for our Environment and Natural Resources

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Annual Report

July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023



Hunter Quinones (intern), Josie Anderson, and Alex Murphy working with Veronica Tangiri on their Microinvertebrate certification (not pictured: Kim Lowther)

Our mission:
 To provide leadership in the conservation of soil, water, and related resources to all Prince William County citizens, through technical assistance, information, and education.

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

The District receives funding via a Memorandum of Agreement with Prince William County to provide technical assistance, as well as compliance programs that solve and prevent natural resource problems for landowners, and encourage good stewardship of the environment.



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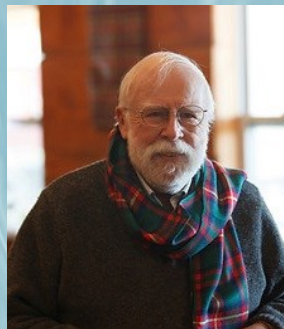


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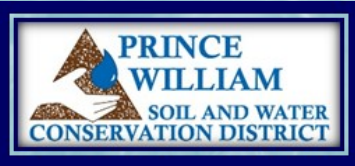
**Alex Murphy
Conservation
Specialist**



**James Mitchell
Conservation
Specialist**



**Jay Yankey
Cost-Share Specialist**



About our County

About our county



According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2017 Census of Agriculture for Prince William County (latest census available), there are 22,874 acres of farmland in the county, approximately 10% of the total acres. This represents a 36% decrease in farmland over the 2012 census. The average size of farms is 75 acres. The market value of products sold is \$11,612,000. Farmland in Prince William County is mainly located in three magisterial districts: Brentsville, Gainesville, and Coles.

What is the Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District?

The Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District (PWSWCD) encompasses all of Prince William County. Our mission 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. The District accomplishes this mission by administering the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice Cost-Share Program in the county and developing and administering educational programs to youth and adults. The District plays a role in the larger objective of improving water quality not only in local watersheds, but also in the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay Watersheds..

PWSWCD provides the following services to the residents of Prince William County:

- Agriculture—Conservation Plans, Virginia Agriculture Cost-Share program
- Youth Education—Conservation Capsules (classroom education), Farm Field Days, Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE), Arbor Day
- Water Quality—Adopt-a-Stream/Pond, Water Quality Monitoring, Chemical Monitoring, Floatables Monitoring, Plastic Pollution
- Home Owners—Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP), Gardeners Gold.

Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts



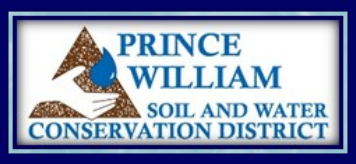
Virginia's diverse terrain is covered by 47 soil and water conservation districts. Each district provide a variety of services, uniquely dependent to their locations and their goals and objectives. "The mission of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and its Foundation is to provide and promote leadership in the conservation of natural resources through stewardship and education programs. "

National Association of Conservation Districts

Across the United States that are 3,000 conservation districts who are helping local people to conserve land, water, forests, wildlife, and other related natural resources.. More than 17,000 volunteers serve in elected or appointed positions on conservation districts' governing boards. They work directly with more than 2.3 million cooperating land managers nationwide, and their efforts touch more than 778 million acres of private land.



National Association of
Conservation Districts



Agriculture

Prince William County Deliverables

The District wrote 56 conservation plans for over 1,076 acres that reduced the following nutrients from entering our waterways:

Nitrogen	Phosphorus	Sediment
1,499.0 pounds	241.7 pounds	12.0 tons

These numbers represent 252 head of livestock eliminating approximately 2,199.5 tons of manure per year.

DCR Cost-Share Best Management Practices (BMPs)

The District completed 6 cost-share practices for over 463.9 acres that reduced the following nutrients from entering our waterways:

Nitrogen	Phosphorus	Sediment
2,627.07 pounds	71.35 pounds	63.45 tons

We partner with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) under grant agreements to provide technical assistance in designing and installing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for natural resources conservation. Under these agreements for the Nonpoint Source Pollution Cost-Share Program we gave technical assistance to 35 citizens for the following: agricultural production, BMPs, drainage/stormwater management, urban erosion, agricultural erosion, land disturbance, partner agency assistance, pond management, trees, native plants, water quality, weeds, and wildlife management.



Prince William Clean Water Farm Award Triple Creek Ranch



Farm Name: Triple Creek Ranch

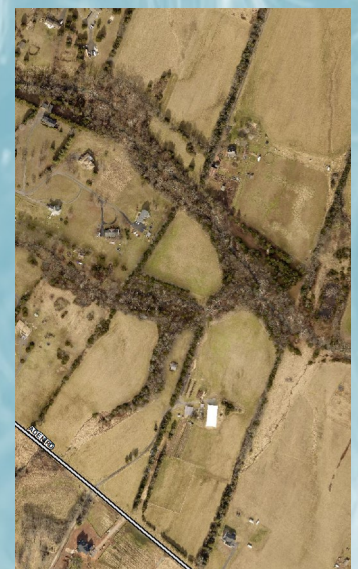
Location: Nokesville, VA

Watershed: PL40: Cedar Run-Slate Run

Farm acreages: 21.6 acres of pasture, 4.8 acres of hayland, and 7.2 acres of woodland. There are 3 Dexter Cows, 2 heifers, 1 bull (beef), and 4 horses rotationally grazing the pasture land.

Conservation: Triple Creek Ranch has installed the SL-6W Stream Exclusion and WQ-12 rain water runoff projects under the Virginia Agriculture Cost Share programs. Other things to note:

- All streams protected with 150' + livestock exclusion fencing and 5,170' of stream bank protection along Slate Run.
- 21.6 acres of pastureland and 4.8 acres of hayland are managed using a certified nutrient management plan. She also follows her Prescribed Grazing Plan and the use of rotational grazing with her livestock to make sure her fields are vegetated with adequate forages and that her animals are healthy.



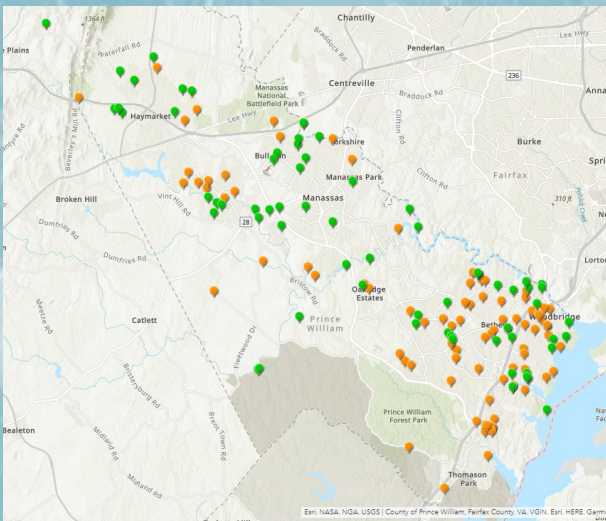
We continued to see a growing interest among residents in PY22 to learn more about water quality and to promote clean streams within PWSWCD. This shows the important role water plays in our communities, in relation to human health and vitality.

Adopt-A-Stream/Pond

Here are this year's highlights from our Adopt-a-Stream/Pond Program:

- 43 cleanup events took place in PY23 (September 2022 to June 2023)
- 21,740 pounds of trash were removed from 69.4 miles of streams
- 1,168 volunteers put in over 3,474 hours of time to support the cause of clean streams and improved water quality

Current and available clean-up sites can now be viewed online at <https://arcg.is/1n0rnC1>.



Bull Run Protectors Stream Clean-up 11/12/2022 Group Shot



Bull Run Protectors Stream Clean-up Hurrah for Cleaning the Bay!

Water Quality Monitoring

PWSWCD continued to develop partnerships to help with water quality outreach. Data collected from our monitoring and outreach is shared with Prince William County (PWC) Environmental Services and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Here are this year's highlights from our Water Quality Monitoring program:

- The number of active monitoring sites decreased to 116; these sites include chemical monitoring, benthic macroinvertebrate monitoring, and E.coli monitoring
- 11 Volunteers were certified for Biological Monitoring
- 11 Volunteers were trained for Chemical Monitoring

Conservation Capsules-to-go

- 125 teachers reserved 20 capsules for in-classroom and virtual presentations reaching approximately 1,794 students
- Popular capsules this year include the Watershed Enviroscape Model, Weathering and Erosion, and Soils
-

Farm Field Days

- Farm Field Days in PY2023 was held on October 12 and 13, 2022 with 800+ students and parents attending the event. The event includes: Farm animals and displays, Forestry demonstration about trees and how they support the people and animals in Prince William County, and other topics.



Native Tree Plantings

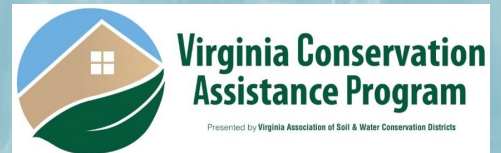
30 native trees were planted at 5 different schools in the county: Kilby Elementary, T Clay Woods Elementary, Marumscos Hills Elementary, Benton Middle, and Hylton High School

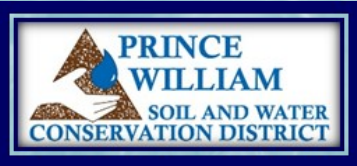
VCAP

The **Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)** is an urban cost -share program that provides financial incentives and technical and educational assistance to property owners installing eligible Best Management Practices (BMP's) in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

These practices can be installed in areas where problems like erosion, poor drainage, or poor vegetation occur. Qualified sites can be used for residential, commercial, or recreational purposes .

The Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District (PWSWCD) did not complete any urban VCAP projects in PY23. However, conservation staff provided technical assistance and site visits to several people interested in the program. The lack of completed VCAP projects is due to training three new Conservation Specialists and everyone completing their Level 1 Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional certification.





Volunteers and Partners

Award Ceremony

On June 13, 2023, PWSWCD had an award ceremony as a way to thank our volunteers over the past year who have dedicated their time and energy to help keep Prince William County beautiful.

Winners included:

- Adopt-a-Stream Volunteer of the Year 2022: Lisa Matthews
- Water Quality Special Team Award (Chemical) 2022: Don Wood
- Water Quality Special Team Award (Biological) 2022: Maria Stewart
- Youth Environmental Champion for Prince William County: Jahara Lewis
- Outstanding Adopt-A-Stream School: Gar-Field High School
- Outstanding Partner – Cooperate Organization 2022: Aurora Flight Sciences
- Outstanding Partner—Non-Governmental Organization 2022: Leopold's Preserve
- Adopt-A-Stream Team of the Year 2022: Belmont Bay Paddlers
- Clean Water Farm Award 2022: Triple Creek Ranch (Mary and Hans Jerrell)
- Ducks Unlimited Conservationist of the Year 2022: Joe Ivers
- Farm Field Days Awards for 2022: PWC Fairgrounds, Dinkie Muse, Jim Gehlsen, and Kristin Saul, Animal Hero



Other Events

The District also assisted with other events such as:

- Farmer and Landowner Outreach Program on Jan. 24, 2023
- Native Plant Symposium on Feb. 12, 2023 (in-person and virtual)



Attendees at this year's Native Plant Symposium; another full house!

Educational Sculpture

Angela Hoseltine Pozzi is the Artist behind this stunning piece of Water Quality Educational Outreach art which features the caddisfly and rich biodiversity around aquatic ecosystems. Ms. Pozzi has also done some artwork for the Smithsonian Museum. This art is to promote clean water awareness in Northern Virginia. This 14-month project collected plastic debris from Prince William County's waterways that was later shipped to Portland, Oregon.

The completed piece of art arrived in Prince William County last May with a celebration.

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia (CFNV) supported this project through a grant offered to promote the Conservation District's mission of natural resources protection and conservation.

Special thanks to the support of the Prince William County School System, through its Center for Environment and Natural Resource Sciences (CENS) at Freedom High School, for promoting clean water awareness for future generations. This Center's leadership role in promoting natural sciences will promote environmental sustainability in Northern Virginia and beyond.

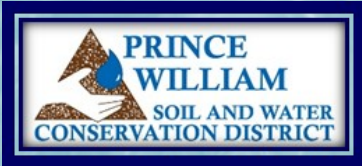
Also special thanks to the Prince William Service Authority, and Fairfax Water Authority for their great community partnership in supporting the Conservation District's mission of clean water in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

The Prince William County Service Authority had the Water Quality Educational Outreach Sculpture on display to the public this summer at the Raymond Spittle Building in Woodbridge.



Net-spinning Caddisfly - *Oecetis nocturna*





Prince William Environmental Excellence Foundation (PWEEF)



“Dedicated to Helping Provide Environmental, Agricultural, and Natural Resources Conservation Education Beyond the Walls of the Classroom.”

PWEE Foundation Board of Directors

Jim Gehlsen, Chairman, Treasurer

Will Lintner, Vice Chair

Linda Dunn, Secretary

Harry Glasgow, Director

The Prince William Environmental Excellence Foundation is a 501 (C) (3) nonprofit affiliated with the Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District. The foundation raises money to support PWSWCD educational and outreach activities. In FY23 the foundation provided funding to support the Prince William SWCD youth environmental education programs and the Annual Prince William Native Plant Symposium

Meaningful Watershed Environmental Experience (MWEE)

The Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District (District) received the Virginia Watershed Educational Programs Grant provided by the Department of Conservation Resources (DCR). The grant was used for the District’s MWEE Teacher Training and Student Action Support project. The goal of this grant was to educate and connect teachers with the resources in our community. There has been a disconnect with Prince William County schools and the community; this training gave teachers a much better understanding of how our partner organizations can help them host a successful and ongoing MWEE event at their own schools. Two training events were held at two different locations to give teachers an opportunity to attend one of these sessions:

- March 7, 2023
Windy Knoll Farm, Nokeville, VA
- March 9, 2023
Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Woodbridge, VA

A total of 41 adults attended these trainings. These adults included Prince William County school teachers, Prince William Master Gardeners, and Merrimac Farm Master Naturalists. Grades represented were from K-12. Due to the success of this grant, the District will apply again for the next program year.

