



# Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District

## Annual Report 2019 - 2020

The Headwaters SWCD is one of **47** Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Formed in **1975**, our District is a “political subdivision of state government” that provides citizens in Augusta County and the Cities of Staunton & Waynesboro the structure and the capability to solve conservation problems at a local, grassroots level. Cooperation between related agencies, including sharing technical expertise, enables the Headwaters District to assist the community in protecting its natural resources.

The public is invited to monthly Board meetings which are now held every **third Tuesday @10:00 AM**, Augusta County Government Center, Verona.

**Headwaters SWCD**  
**70 Dick Huff Lane**  
**Verona, VA 24482**

**Phone: 540-248-0148**

**Website: [www.headwaterswcd.org](http://www.headwaterswcd.org)**

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### Board of Directors

Headwaters District is governed by an **eight-member** Board of Directors, six of whom are elected in the general election and two are appointed, one at-large and one who is always a County Extension Agent.

**Richard Shiflet, Chair**  
**Otis Bilkins, Vice-Chair**  
**Wendy Turley, Treasurer**  
**DuBose Egleston, Jr., Secretary**  
**Buzz Easterling**  
**Bobby Drumheller**  
**Darren Hemp**  
**Matt Booher**

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### Associate Directors

Appointed by the Board are Associate Directors, respected in their fields of natural resources, education or business.

<b>Charles Horn</b>	<b>Urbie Nash</b>
<b>Jim Nichols</b>	<b>Charles Huppuch</b>
<b>Jim Boland</b>	<b>Charles Schooley</b>
<b>Steve Talley</b>	<b>Jeff Slaven</b>
<b>Ian Heatwole</b>	<b>Leo Tammi</b>
<b>Judy Burtner</b>	

The Headwaters SWCD Board members serve as volunteers.

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The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the VA Soil & Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Augusta County, City of Waynesboro and City of Staunton also support the Headwaters SWCD through financial assistance, now including funds for a Dam Technician.

### Headwaters SWCD Staff

**John Kaylor**, Senior Conservation Specialist  
[jkaylor@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:jkaylor@co.augusta.va.us)

**Rhonda Cline**, District Operations Manager  
[rmcline@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:rmcline@co.augusta.va.us)

**Cathy Perry**, District Operations Manager – retired July 2020  
[cperry@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:cperry@co.augusta.va.us)

**Jason Wilfong**, Conservation Technician – resigned  
[jwilfong@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:jwilfong@co.augusta.va.us)

**Aaron Lucas**, Conservation Technician  
[alucas@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:alucas@co.augusta.va.us)

**Josh Walker**, Conservation Technician - resigned  
[jwalker@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:jwalker@co.augusta.va.us)

**Michael Jimenez**, Dam Technician  
[mjimenez@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:mjimenez@co.augusta.va.us)

**Rachel Winter**, Education Specialist/Technical Assistant  
[rmcculler@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:rmcculler@co.augusta.va.us)

**Kayla Mathews**, Operations Assistant - resigned  
[kmathews@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:kmathews@co.augusta.va.us)

### Agency Partners

VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (332-9991)  
 VA Dept. of Wildlife Resources (248-9360)  
 VA Dept. of Environmental Quality (574-7800)  
 VA Dept. of Health (332-7830)  
 VA Cooperative Extension (245-5750)  
 VA Dept. of Forestry (363-7002)  
 VA Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services (540-209-9110)  
 US Forest Service (432-0187)  
 Farm Service Agency (248-6218)  
 Natural Resources Conservation Service (248-6218)  
 Valley Conservation Council (886-3541)  
 Shenandoah Pure Water Forum ([info@purewaterforum.org](mailto:info@purewaterforum.org))  
 Friends of the Middle River ([fomr.mangun@gmail.com](mailto:fomr.mangun@gmail.com))  
 Chesapeake Bay Foundation ([AHorn@cbf.org](http://AHorn@cbf.org))

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All programs and services of the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or disability.



## **Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost-Share & Tax Credit Program**

The District has completed its **36th** year of administering the VA Agricultural BMP Cost-Share program, funded through the VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation. DCR receives funds from the Virginia General Assembly, and distributes funds to SWCDs. These cost-share funds provide an incentive to agricultural producers to apply beneficial BMPs to their land for more effective control of sediments, nutrient losses and the transport of pollutants into our waterways.

With the addition of the DuPont Settlement, partnership with Trout Unlimited, and the new 0% interest state loan program, the District has been able to work with landowners and renters who were historically not able to participate due to cost.

The Headwaters District paid landowners a total of **\$2,498,808.47** in fiscal year **7/1/19 – 6/30/20** to achieve the following results:

- 258 acres forested buffer
- 41.88 acres grassed buffer
- 20.5 miles of stream fenced
- 19,609 tons of waste stored
- 242 acres permanent conversion from cropland to hay/pasture
- 7,398 acres cover crop

The program has changed significantly over the past few years and many new practices are available. For a more detailed breakdown of cost share payment per contract or practice type, contact the District.



## **Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)**

VCAP is an urban cost-share program that provides financial incentives and technical and education assistance to property owners installing eligible BMP's in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

These practices can be installed in areas of your yard where problems like erosion, poor drainage or poor vegetation occur. Qualified sites shall be used for residential, commercial, or recreational purposes with a proposed practice that addresses a need.



## **Resource Management Plans**

This state program provides a voluntary way to promote the use of conservation practices that improve farming operations and water quality. RMP's can help farm owners and operators take advantage of all the conservation measures at their disposal. The plans are designed to encourage farmers, either the owner or operator, to use a high level of best management practices (BMPs) that reduce runoff pollution to local waters and, in many cases, improve the farmer's financial bottom line.

In return for full implementation, the plan holder can be assured that he or she is in compliance with any new state nutrient, sediment and water quality standards; in particular, regulations related to the Chesapeake Bay and all local stream segment TMDLs. The certificate of safe harbor is valid for **9** years provided the farmer continues to implement the RMP. There are two practices that can help with financial assistance to develop and to implement Resource Management Plans.

## Annual District Awards Banquet

In January, 2020, the District celebrated the accomplishments achieved over the past year, recognizing those who excelled in their respective fields. The following award winners were honored:

### Conservation Farmers of the Year

**2019: Scott Hollow Farm – Taylor & Lois Cole**

**2019: Deer Creek Farm – Roger & Hilda Craig**

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### Retiring Director Recognition Award

*Judy Burtner*

*Jennifer Lewis*

*Charles Schooley*

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### Conservation Educator of the Year Award

*Courtney Hallacher*

*Blair Hoffman*

### **Scott Hollow Farm; Taylor and Lois Cole—James Basin**

Taylor and Lois Cole of Scott Hollow Farm, located in Deerfield, VA along the Calfpasture River were named the statewide 2019 James Basin winners of the Virginia Clean Water Farm Award. The Coles run an all grass-fed beef operation where they sell directly to restaurants and consumers. They have approximately 150 acres of owned and rented pasture where they rotationally graze their herd of 35 cow/calf pairs through 14 paddocks. Scott Hollow farm also has 220 acres of woodland in a Forest Stewardship Management Plan. Taylor and Lois have protected their 500 acres of Scott Hollow Farm for the future with two conservation easements.

The Cole's had multiple CREP contracts with NRCS and completed numerous livestock exclusion practices with the Conservation District. Through their efforts, the Cole's have protected 39,636 feet of streambanks; approximately 4 acres of wetlands, and installed over 88 acres of riparian and wildlife buffer. Taylor and Lois also voluntarily planted a .25 acre native wildflower meadow for pollinators.

The Coles worked extensively with the District and the Army Corps of Engineers to stabilize 150 feet of eroding streambank along the Calfpasture River. Trout are frequently seen and fished through the section of the Calfpasture on the Cole's property.

Mr. and Mrs. Cole are always looking for and learning new ways to improve the natural resources on Scott Hollow Farm.

### **Deer Creek Farm; Roger and Hilda Craig-Shenandoah Basin Virginia Clean Water Farm Award 2019**

Deer Creek Farm, owned and operated by Roger and Hilda Craig, located in Verona, VA along Christians Creek is the 2019 Headwaters SWCD Clean Water Farm Award recipient for the Shenandoah Basin. Roger works with Craig Auction Company, while Hilda handles most of the day-to-day feeding and operations.

The Craig's run a 54 Angus cow/calf operation on their 170 acres of pasture. The herd is divided into two herds; one on each side of Christians Creek. The herds are rotationally grazed spring-fall through twelve paddocks, six on either side of Christians Creek. The Craig's worked with the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District to protect over 9,400 feet of Christians Creek, and create over 9 acres of riparian buffer. To enhance their upland pasture rotation management, a concrete forded crossing, additional cross fencing, and 5 watering troughs were

also installed. They currently have an active contract with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to install additional practices to continue to enhance their rotational grazing system.

Hilda manages 35 honeybee hives and is a member of the Shenandoah Valley Beekeepers Club. The Craig's are careful with spraying in their pastures because of honeybees and other pollinators.

Hilda has attended a Rotational Grazing School offered by Virginia Cooperative Extension and participated in an American Farmland Trust: Women for the Land Conservation Learning Circle held in Augusta County for women landowners.

Roger and Hilda's consideration and desire to continue to improve the pasture management and forage production reflects their conservation-oriented mindset.

## Flood Control Dams

The Hearthstone rehabilitation project has been completed. Rehab included riser upgrades, auxiliary spillway modifications, toe drain replacement and access road improvements.

Robinson Hollow, Inch Branch, Toms Branch & Todd Lake have all been rehabilitated over the past 10 years. Waynesboro Nurseries dam is currently in the planning stages for rehabilitation.

Headwaters has contracted Zion Marine for a mid-level gate installation at #26 Inch Branch. This will allow staff to lower the water level for maintenance projects. Installation will be completed February 2021.

Headwaters participated in a Table Top exercise which is required by the state to be held once every six years. This was done in partnership with the US Forest Service. Attendees included Augusta County ECC, Fire and Rescue, State Police, VDOT, Weather Service, City of Waynesboro, City of Staunton, Red Cross, DCR, Landowners, VADOC and District Staff/Directors. The event consisted of emergency response reviews and planning.

Annual inspections of all 16 dams were conducted on March 18-20. Mowing was completed in July.

Total expended for general dam repair, maintenance & major rehabilitation, as well as staff & support, for **FY-2019/2020** was **\$1,328,794.61**.



## Education



Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the Headwaters local Envirothon scheduled for on April 2nd was cancelled. Instead, we encouraged competing teams and coaches to participate in VASWCD's Natural Resources Testing Week. We had multiple students place in the Top 10 for various resource categories. The District was able to host a local training on the special topic for our high school teams before schools closed. Teams were able to tour the Coyner Springs Water Treatment Plant in Waynesboro. We congratulate these students and commend their hard work and dedication to the Envirothon program during such a difficult year.



Next year's special topic is ***"Water Resources Management: Local Control and Local Solutions"***.

## Educational Scholarships

The District educational scholarship was awarded to Samuel (Sam) Hadacek from Buffalo Gap High School. Sam will attend Blue Ridge Community College with plans to transfer to a 4-year university to pursue an undergraduate degree in Agricultural Science.

The VASWCD Educational Foundation continues to offer scholarships at the state level as well. The District chooses one application to forward on to the VASWCD Educational Foundation for statewide consideration. This year's choice to forward was Samuel Hadacek.

## Classroom Lessons and Outreach Programs

In September 2019, the District unveiled the newest addition to our Education Program—The Underground Classroom. Constructed from a new 22 foot cargo trailer, this classroom provides hands-on interactive learning on soil health and soil conservation.

During this year, the District hosted/participated in 37 education and outreach events. Over 5,000 students, teachers, youth and adults participated in our conservation education programs.

In March 2020, we unfortunately had to cancel over 15 scheduled presentations due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The District switched our education and outreach efforts to virtual formats to still meet the needs of our community. A virtual tour of

the classroom was created and can be viewed on our YouTube page or by the following link: [https://youtu.be/gS\\_8pEx8wVw](https://youtu.be/gS_8pEx8wVw)



## Financials

### Income FY-19/20

Cost-Share (including interest)	<b>1,416,061</b>
DCR Operations & Administration	<b>198,992</b>
Technical Assistance (including voluntary BMP)	<b>409,862</b>
DCR Dam Funds (grant)	<b>33,000</b>
Mobile Education Unit, CB License Plate, Envirothon	<b>27,529</b>
Local Dam Escrow (including interest)	<b>11,534</b>
Local Operations, Education, Compensation	<b>125,269</b>
Local Watershed	<b>22,000</b>
Dam Rehabilitation	<b>1,186,642</b>
Product sales and use tax	<b>52</b>
Underground classroom (mileage, rentals, staff)	<b>1,235</b>
Interest	<b>3,105</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$3,435,281</b>

### Expenses FY-19/20

Cost-Share Program / Payments	<b>2,499,609</b>
Education, PR, Youth	<b>7,403</b>
Employee Compensation Packages	<b>460,485</b>
Support Expenses (for positions)	<b>37,411</b>
Office & Operations	<b>3,414</b>
Local Watershed	<b>13,648</b>
DCR Dam Funds (grant)	<b>29,506</b>
DCR Technical Assistance (other than employee comp)	<b>3,290</b>
Various Grants	<b>56,353</b>
Dam Rehabilitation	<b>1,186,677</b>
Misc (dues, memorials, get wells, retirements gifts, product costs)	<b>4781</b>
Designated Fund	<b>35,266</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>4,337,843</b>

