

**INSURE
TOMORROW
THROUGH**

CONSERVATION

**Albemarle
Soil and Water
Conservation District**

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DISTRICT PERSONNEL

Sherry Harris, Dist. Administrator
Scott Alons, NCACSP Technician
Kim Dozier-Smichnick Dist. Admin.
Will Creef, Soil/Storm Water Tech.
Dianne Watts, Dist. Administrator
Dwane Hinson, NCACSP Tech
Janet Stallings, Admin./Technician
Brian Lannon, NCACSP Technician

**USDA NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Doug Wassum, Dist Conservationist
Jimmy Munden, NRCS Technician

**ANNUAL REPORT
July 1, 2015- June 30, 2016
Accomplishments and Activities**

The **Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)** is a nonprofit subdivision of the State of North Carolina and is charged by state law with the responsibility of promoting conservation and coordinating all the resource activities within the District.

Members of the Board of Supervisors serve four year terms. Fifteen seats are filled in the general election and two seats are appointed by the State Soil and Water Commission. District supervisors, along with District and NRCS staff, continually seek, utilize, and coordinate assistance from all available and appropriate sources.

To carry out the District program, bimonthly business meetings are conducted on a rotating county basis. Special committees are appointed to handle designated events.



ALBEMARLE SWCD SUPERVISORS

All meetings of the District are advertised and open to the public. Anyone interested in conservation is encouraged to attend.

Using the Annual Plan of Work, with guidance from the Long Range Plan, each county set priorities and planned the year's activities. This Annual Report reflects those accomplishments.

Soil and Water Supervisor Boards were provided funds by their respective County Commissioners to be used for administrative and technical assistance to carry out the district program, the NC Agriculture Cost-share Program, and to assist with Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) activities. At various times throughout the year, supervisors and district staff gave oral updates to their County Commissioners. Matching funds were also received from the state and were used to sponsor various educational projects.

Resource inventories made available to the District were used by agency people and land users in all counties. Soil surveys, recreation appraisals, flood plain maps, along with topographic elevations, are just a few of the inventories that get wide public use.



District Activities and Highlights



Ben Knox NCASWCD President presents Manly West with Past President's Award.

In January, Supervisors and staff attended the 72nd Annual Meeting of the NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts in Durham.

Area Five Fall Meeting & Area 5 Spring Meeting both held in Windsor at the Senior Center, were attended by supervisors and staff.



Albemarle SWCD presents Mike Doxey with clock in appreciation of his 29 years of service to the District and Currituck SWCD.



Manly West presents Sherry Harris (Chowan) with appreciation award for her help with the State meeting.



Steve Harris received his 25 year length of service award from Chairman Mark Powell.

County High School for winning first Forestry Contest, Northeastern placed second. Third place honors School. Length of Service award was Supervisor Steve Harris (25 years).

Mike Doxey retired September 30, 2015. Currituck SWCD welcomed new Soil/Storm Water Technician Will Creef who started work in October, 2015. Mike Doxey and Sherry Harris represented the district at the District Employees Workshop in Hickory, NC.

At the annual Holiday Awards Banquet, education awards were presented to Gates place in the High School



Will Creef, new Soil & Storm Water Technician (Currituck SWCD).

also presented to Pasquotank

Information and Education

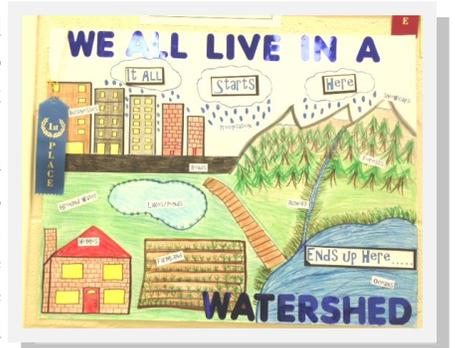


Kensy Tarkington (Camden) won 2nd place in the State Poster contest for sixth grade.

Classroom presentations, videos, and informational materials were provided to approximately 1,400 students throughout the Albemarle District.

The District had excellent participation in the 63rd Annual Conservation Poster, Essay and Bookmark Contests. Contestants and special guests were treated to a luncheon sponsored by the Albemarle District. Camden and Pasquotank Counties received honors in the Area competitions. "We All Live in a Watershed" was this year's theme, thanks to all who participated and congratulations to all winners!

Kensy's Poster



Information and Education

The Albemarle District sponsored the Future Farmers of America (FFA) 54th Annual **Forestry**



Second Place Forestry Winners—*Northeastern County High School*, led by Advisor Chelsie McPherson. Team members are Ethan Pierce, Zack Boyce, Jake Cullens, Dustin Kinonos and Marriah Boyce and Cody Satterfield were on the junior team.

Contest and the **Land Judging Contest**. Eight counties and three FFA federations are represented at these contests annually.



Charles Watts presents Native American information/artifacts at a recent environmental field day.

Each county in the District sponsored **Environmental Awareness Field Days**. Stations highlighting forestry, wildlife, water quality, wetlands and aquatic life and soils—to name a few—were enjoyed by students in the fourth through sixth grades. **“We All Need Trees”** was the theme of **Soil & Water Stewardship Week** observed during the month of April. Materials were distributed throughout the district.



A rain garden is a garden which collects rainfall and storm water runoff. Funding is provided through the CCAP Program.



Northeastern High School Eagles FFA won first place in the Coastal Envirothon Competition.



Little River Clear-Snag

As part of the water quality improvement, drainage is being improved and restored to adequate levels. Little River has been cleared of debris, drainage ditches have been improved, and controlled to manage total drainage outflows.

Cost-Share Program Accomplishments

The **NC Agriculture Cost-Share Program** was established by the General Assembly in 1985 to address non-point source pollution. This year, the five counties in the Albemarle District obligated **\$187,462** for cost share assistance to help **39 cooperators finance Best Management Practices (BMP's)** needed to improve water quality. Some of the BMP's installed or planned included critical area planting, water control structures, conservation tillage, long term no-till, precision nutrient management, cover crops, land smoothing, precision agrichemical and crop conversion.

Close monitoring continues on long-term no-till and three year conservation tillage on **peanuts and vegetables**.

District Supervisors are in charge of administering the program and approving cost-



Local sweet corn is abundant in the Albemarle District.

sharing based on recommendations of their technical staff. Supervisors, district staff and NRCS technical personnel made annual spot-checks of BMP's to ensure program integrity.

RC & D Projects 2015/2016

Little River Watershed Innovative Stormwater Project (Perq & Pasquotank)

In-stream wetlands were constructed along approximately 6,500 feet of main drainage canals on both sides of the Little River to demonstrate impact on storm-water management & water quality protection. Water quality monitoring will continue in 2016-17. Grants from CWMTF, EPA 319h & USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife support this innovative approach to water quality protection. Partners on the project include Perquimans and Pasquotank Counties, Pasquotank and Perquimans SWCD, NCSU, ECSU and local farmers.

Camden High School Wetlands (Camden) — ARCD provided grantwriting and design assistance for USFWS and DENR DWR funds to construct wetlands on the high school campus. Project partners include Camden SWCD and Camden High School. Project completion is anticipated by Fall, 2016.

Pembroke Creek Park Improvements (Chowan)

Grantwriting and technical assistance were provided to Chowan County and the Edenton/Chowan Recreation Department to complete the repairs to Pembroke Creek Park and addition of fishing piers, handicap accessible parking and kayak launch, lighting and storage with funding from CAMA. A second CAMA grant is being pursued to complete renovation of the boardwalk in 2016-2017.

Albemarle-Pamlico Outdoor Schoolyard Habitat (Chowan) — ARCD is providing assistance to White Oak and DF Walker Schools to construct wetlands, a pollinator garden, walking trails and wildlife viewing areas on the campus to provide outdoor learning experiences for students. Funding from USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife will be used to complete the project in 2016.

Albemarle Water Quality Protection (Chowan, Perq, Pasq, Camden, Currituck). The Albemarle's sounds, rivers and creeks are essential & critical assets that support commerce, recreation & tourism and the region is facing a Perfect Storm of threats to water quality (see 2nd, 3rd and 4th bullets below).

Regional Approach to Water Quality Protection
ARCD, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, The Albemarle Commission, & others are developing a regional approach to address these pressing water quality issues, which affect residents of all counties. Key activities include:

Raise public awareness on threats to water quality

Work with state agencies and universities to determine the cause of the blue-green algal bloom in 2015

Determine the economic value of regional water resources and the potential impact of yearly algal blooms on the regional economy

Coordinate a regional approach for dealing with hydrilla, alligator weed, storm debris in waterways, nutrients and sediment entering waterways, eroding shorelines and salt water intrusion

Help counties better respond to natural disasters by annually updating county water management plans

Encourage counties to annually budget for threats to water quality and work with state legislators to dedicate matching funds.

Dear Friends and Conservation Partners,

The 2016 year has been a busy one for the Albemarle Soil and Water District. The district has completed multiple conservation projects and held several educational events. Cost-share projects have been strong in all Albemarle District counties. We are fortunate to have growers and land-owners that hold soil and water conservation in high regard. The Albemarle area has many sensitive bodies of water and wetlands that need the full effort of the district to maintain and protect for future generations. Our forestry and farmland is also very important to the economic prosperity of the region and we must continue to protect those assets. The district and its partners strive to educate our youth in the aspects of soil and water conservation. These programs would not be possible without the continued support of county commissioners, state and federal leaders, as well as staff and sponsors. We will put all our energy towards a strong completion of 2016 and begin setting new goals for next year.

Mark Powell, Albemarle District Chairman