

# Conservation InFARMation

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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.

## Spring—Summer 2024

### Drought Warning



#### What does it mean?

We had the driest June on record in Virginia before we had our recent rains. Was the rain enough to stem the drought? Unfortunately, no. “Continued lack of precipitation, above average temperatures, and significant soil moisture deficits continue to contribute to observed declines,” according to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Recent precipitation withstanding, DEQ has still issued a Drought Warning for our area which means “a **significant drought event is imminent.**”

As far as agriculture goes, DEQ says, “Producers who have the ability to do so

are supplementing by irrigating. Additionally, many livestock producers are feeding hay due to dry pastures.”

Currently, there are no serious restrictions, save for “protecting water supplies by minimizing water use, monitor drought conditions, and detect and repair leaks.” At this point, water conservation activities are voluntary.

For more information, and to get the latest updates, go to DEQ’s website at <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/water/water-quantity/drought>.

### Drought Resilience!

#### How do you weather a drought?

- ◆ You can conserve water in your home in many ways:
  - ⇒ Kitchen: Only run a full dishwasher and operate it on “light wash”. Hand washing—use tubs, don’t let the water run.
  - ⇒ Bathroom: Don’t let the water run when brushing your teeth and collect the shower water for plants when it’s running to warm up.
  - ⇒ Laundry: Run a full load of clothes and set the water level for the size of your load.
- ◆ You can conserve water outside too:
  - ⇒ If you do need to water plants do so in early morning or late evening.
  - ⇒ Use a commercial car wash that recycles water to wash your car or just avoid washing your car.
  - ⇒ Use a broom or blower to clean debris from your driveway and sidewalk, not the hose.
  - ⇒ PLANT NATIVES! They don’t need water as frequently and usually will survive a dry period without watering.

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## Water Quality Monitoring Volunteers Make a Difference!

From January 2024 to May 2024, the [Adopt-A-Stream/Pond/River Program](#) registered 23 clean-up events, with over 691 volunteers! A total of 855 litter bags and 64 tires, among other materials, were collected. This was over 17,850 pounds of debris taken from Prince William's waterways. These events covered a total of over 37.5 miles of waterways out of the 1,100 miles of streams in Prince William County.

Volunteers under the [Chemical Monitoring Program](#) collected data on conductivity, pH, Dissolved Oxygen, Turbidity, Depth/Clarity, and temperature. These volunteers monitored at 89 sites with about 9 new sites.

**How can you promote clean water in Prince William?** Volunteer with the Conservation District's Water Quality programs!

- **The Chemical Monitoring program** supports the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) through the Chesapeake Bay Monitoring Cooperative (CMC) with



professional chemical data on conductivity, pH, turbidity, temperature, and dissolved oxygen (tier II) from any location of choice.

- **The Biological Monitoring program** promotes community science, supports personal projects, and help students gain community service hours. This program provides an outdoor biological field experience and samples benthic macroinvertebrates that determine the quality of local streams.
- **The Adopt-A-Stream/Pond/River program** allows individuals, families, or groups to promote environmental stewardship in the community through streams/ponds cleanup events supported by the Conservation District.

For more information about the Water Quality programs, please contact us at 571-379-7514, email [waterquality@pwsxcd.org](mailto:waterquality@pwsxcd.org), or use the QR code.



## Biological Water Quality Monitoring Certification Opportunity!

### JOIN US!

Certification Training:

Saturday, August 17th

If you want to become a certified Biological Monitor:

Contact Veronica Tangiri  
[waterquality@pwsxcd.org](mailto:waterquality@pwsxcd.org).



## The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)

### What is VCAP and how can it help me as a landowner?

VCAP provides financial, technical, and education assistance to property owners installing eligible stormwater control practices. These practices can be installed in areas of your yard where problems like erosion, poor drainage, or poor vegetation occur. We can help:

- ◆ **RESTORE** problem areas
- ◆ **CONTROL** and minimize erosion
- ◆ **CONSERVE** water within the landscape
- ◆ **IMPROVE** riparian buffer areas
- ◆ **PROMOTE** wildlife habitat
- ◆ **RE-VEGETATE** bare spots
- ◆ **STABILIZE** drainage ways
- ◆ **TREAT** stormwater runoff

Why do Virginia's waters need improving? Non-point source pollution (roads, parking lots, sidewalks, homes, and offices) is the leading cause of water quality problems. Rainfall or snowmelt from suburban lawns, golf courses, and paved surfaces picks up and carries

away natural and human-made pollutants depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters and ground waters. VCAP is an opportunity to help you do your part to improve water quality.

So who pays for it?

VCAP can reimburse 35-80% of the costs to install your practice, depending on length of contract and the practice. Also, landowners have the option to get 50% upfront payment to help with initial costs. For more information contact Nicole Slazinski at [nicoleethier@pwsxcd.org](mailto:nicoleethier@pwsxcd.org).



Rain Garden



Conservation Landscaping Practice replaced invasive English Ivy.

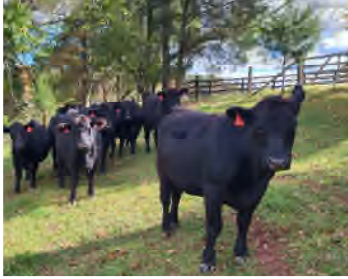
## Conservation Plans

### Free Service for Farmers!

*Did you know that the District can provide a free Conservation Plan for your farm if it is located in Prince William County?*

*If you did know about conservation plans, did you know you can get a renewal every 3 years?*

If you've never heard of a Conservation Plan, it is a voluntary plan written specifically for your farm. The District has been writing conservation plans for Prince William County farmers since 1998.



Every Conservation Plan includes:

- Maps of your property (e.g. fields with acreages, topography, soils, hydrology, Best Management Practices, etc.)
- Nutrient Management Plan (includes soil test results)
- Yields
- Prescribed grazing plan (for livestock)
- Supply/Demand spreadsheets (for livestock)
- And more!

We'll meet with you on your farm to get an idea of your goals and objectives. Then we'll take soil samples and write a conservation plan that's specific to your farm! This conservation plan is completely voluntary. It is written to not only protect our soils and water, but also to save you time and money!

If you are interested in a conservation plan, please contact us at 571-379-7514 or e-mail [duanemohr@pwsxcd.org](mailto:duanemohr@pwsxcd.org). For more information on our conservation plans and other services we provide to farmers, please visit our website at: [www.pwsxcd.org/agriculture](http://www.pwsxcd.org/agriculture).

## Cost Share for Farmers!

Program Year 2025 is now open! If you've been in agriculture production for the past 3 years and you have/had a **water quality problem** on your farm, such as:

- Livestock has/had access to a water body
- No cover crops when main crops aren't growing
- No proper manure storage
- Etc.

then contact us to see if you qualify for cost-share! We have cost-share practices that cover a variety of things such as:

- Stream crossings
- Frost-proof automatic waterers (including pipeline)
- Buffer fencing (to keep livestock out of waterways)
- Buffer fencing already installed
- Winter Cover Crops
- And more!

For more information, please visit our website at [www.pwsxcd.org/costshare](http://www.pwsxcd.org/costshare), call our office at 571-379-7514, or e-mail [duanemohr@pwsxcd.org](mailto:duanemohr@pwsxcd.org).



### POND SEMINAR COMING SOON!

We will hold a seminar on ponds soon. Keep an eye on our website, [www.pwsxcd.org](http://www.pwsxcd.org), for more information as it comes available with details such as where and when.

## We Are Hiring!

**Job Title:** Urban Conservation Specialist

**Position:** Full-Time

**Salary Range:** \$45,000-\$55,000

**Supervision:** Work is performed under direction of the District Manager

**General Description of Work:**

The Urban Conservation Specialist is in charge of developing soil and water quality urban conservation plans using the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) and marketing these plans to the urban/suburban community. This position is also responsible for the recruitment of participants for VCAP programs and the identification of voluntary urban/suburban Best Management Practices (BMPs). The Urban Conservation Specialist will develop and deliver education and outreach programs to urban/suburban landowners. The Urban Conservation Specialist will also work in concert with the Water Quality team to assist with delivering stream clean ups and other program duties.

**Education and Experience:**

Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with a degree in horticulture, environmental science, natural science, or related field, or equivalent experience.

If you are interested in applying to this position, please see our website [www.pwswcd.org](http://www.pwswcd.org). The listing is under Announcements on our homepage.

# Join our



## Farm Field Days 2024!

### Looking for volunteers and livestock!

This year Farm Field Days will be on Wednesday October 9 and Thursday October 10 from 10am-1pm at the Prince William County Fairgrounds, 10624 Dumfries Rd, Manassas, VA 20112. Help teach 4th graders the importance of protecting our environment through a variety of fun and educational activities! Refreshments and lunch will be provided for all of our wonderful volunteers, along with a shirt! Come one day, or both days!

If you're interested in volunteering, or have livestock you'd like to bring, please scan the QR code or visit our website at



[www.pswcd.org](http://www.pswcd.org) and click on our link to **Volunteer for Farm Field Days, Oct. 9th & 10th**. The link is under Announcements. If you have any questions, please contact our Education Specialist, Kim Lowther, at [education@pswcd.org](mailto:education@pswcd.org).

## A Season of MWEEs!

What is a MWEE? It's a Meaningful Watershed Education Experience and PWSWCD participated in several this past spring 2024. We studied and investigated benthic macroinvertebrates with students from their school's local stream to determine its water quality. What did we discover? Many of these local streams near their schools are not as healthy as we hoped. This led students to discuss ways they can help keep their local waterways healthy such as picking up litter so it doesn't end up in our streams by going down storm drains.

Many schools also borrowed and used our watershed models to educate their students about what a watershed is and how pollution can end up in their watershed.

If you would like to implement a MWEE in your classroom or to borrow our Watershed Model, please contact Kim Lowther at [education@pswcd.org](mailto:education@pswcd.org).

## Join our e-mailing lists:

To get the latest District Newsletter and/or to sign up to other e-mailing lists pertaining to your specific interests, please scan the QR code below. This will take you to a google form. As no one likes spam, we will not add you to any e-mailing lists unless you specifically ask.



We hope to continue working with you :)

## Envirothon!

The Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon is a team-based natural resources competition for high school students. Students who participate learn stewardship and management concepts and work to solve real-world environmental problems. The program is field-oriented, community-based, and gives students an opportunity to work with natural resource professionals.

There are six field stations that the competition focuses on: Soils; Water Quality; Wildlife; Trees; Current Issue (changes every year); and Oral presentation on the current issue.

Teams can be created through school clubs, classes, home school groups, 4-H groups, scout troops, local nature centers etc. The only requirement is that the team has a minimum of five students (who are in 9th-12th grade) and one adult advisor/chaperone.

If you would like to form a team and participate in this years competition, contact Kim Lowther at [education@pswcd.org](mailto:education@pswcd.org).

*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 added or removed from our newsletter emailing list, e-mail [pswcd@pswcd.org](mailto:pswcd@pswcd.org) or visit our website at [www.pswcd.org](http://www.pswcd.org). For our events calendar and board meeting dates, visit [www.pswcd.org/calendar.html](http://www.pswcd.org/calendar.html) (board meetings are open to the public). PWSWCD is a non-regulatory political subdivision funded by Prince William County Public Works and the Commonwealth of Virginia. 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.

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