



The Conservation Strip

John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District

JMSWCD Hosts 50-year Celebration

Summer 2016

On May 10, John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District (JMSWCD) celebrated its 50-year anniversary with an evening at the John Barton Payne Building in Warrenton. Dignitaries in attendance included Del. Michael Webert (VA-18), Supervisor Holder Trumbo (Scott District), and Supervisor Chris Butler (Lee District).

The event was attended by about 60 members of the community. Del. Webert presented JMSWCD with a House Joint resolution commemorating the District on 50 years of stewardship in Fauquier County. In addition, Holder Trumbo presented JMSWCD with a proclamation for the District's accomplishments, passed by the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors.

As part of the event, the District also displayed a timeline of the history of JMSWCD. The timeline also explained how Districts initially came into existence in the 1930's as a result of the Dust Bowl and a need for private landowners to conserve their soil. Additionally, the District invited Mr. Henry Green, (JMSWCD Director from 1968-1985) and Mr. W.C. Brown (JMSWCD Director from 1979-1995) to speak about their experiences. They spoke about their memories of JMSWCD's formation and of their time at the District, including some of the biggest successes and highlights that they remembered from that time period. One memory they spoke of in particular was from the 1970s when the District was a pioneer in no-till agriculture and had the first no-till drill in the county which was leased to producers.

The full timeline displaying the history of the District from the 1960s to today is available on the JMSWCD webpage at: www.johnmarshallswcd.com under the About Us/History section.

Here's to 50 more years of conservation work!

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to provide leadership, technical assistance, information, and education to the citizens of Fauquier County in proper soil stewardship, agricultural conservation methods, and water quality protection so as to ensure the wise use of the county's natural resources.



In This Issue

- ◆ Conservation on the Other Side of the World
- ◆ Cost-Share Program Update
- ◆ Summer Interns



Del. Michael Webert presents a House Joint resolution to Gray Coynner and Jennifer Hoysa



Supervisor Holder Trumbo presents a Fauquier County Proclamation to Gray Coynner

Conservation on the Other Side of the World

by Michael Trop, Conservation Education Specialist

In our lives, we often focus on things that are geographically closest to us: local events in our towns, local elections, local news, and why shouldn't we? These are the things that typically affect us the most. However, it's also beneficial to occasionally look at the larger picture and see what is happening far outside of our local region to discover how we compare to other parts of the world.

For my vacation this summer, I had the opportunity to travel to the other side of the world to visit Nepal, a small country located along the backbone of the Himalayan Mountains between India and China. Nepal is among the least developed countries in the world and about 70% of its population relies on agriculture to make a living. During my visit, I decided to keep an eye out to see how a country like Nepal approaches the conservation of its natural resources.

The country's terrain varies from low, flat lands in the south, to steep and rugged mountains in the middle and northern part of the country. In the mountainous regions, there is quite a bit of terrace farming which allows for cultivation on steep slopes while limiting erosion.

In the flatter southern region, rice is by far the dominant crop. While rice is also grown on the terraces of the central mountains, corn and beans were much more common in this region. At the higher mountain elevations, cool-weather vegetables such as cabbage and lettuce were more abundant.

At the John Marshall Soil & Conservation Water District, one of the agricultural best-management practices that we work to implement is livestock exclusion to keep cattle out



Terraced rice paddies between Tansen and Pokhara, Nepal



A trash-laden river in the capital city of Kathmandu, Nepal

of streams. Nepal however is a predominantly Hindu nation where cattle are considered sacred. As a result, many livestock can wander wherever they please. Coming across cattle, goats, or other animals in the middle of the street is a frequent occurrence.

Those who advocate for clean streams would be disheartened to see the condition of some of the rivers in Nepal. Piles of trash along the sides of roads are not uncommon. Of course when it rains, this trash gets washed from the roadways and ends up in the rivers. Even in Chitwan, Nepal's prized National Park, trash was prevalent. In addition to the trash, many streams in the urban cities have been channelized: the rivers flow between near vertical constructed rock walls (this is also the case in many urban areas of the United States too). While stream channelization has numerous detrimental effects on the ecology of streams, these projects are often installed to reclaim land and build right on top of the banks of these streams.

Agriculture is an important aspect of the lives of the Nepali people and this is demonstrated through articles in their newspapers. I only read the English-language newspaper a few times while I was there, but each time, I found articles titled "Agricultural Development Linked to Enterprise," and "Love Your Own Soil."

The exchange of ideas and knowledge is always a good thing and distance shouldn't preclude this from happening. We can learn from Nepal's experiences with agriculture and conservation, just as Nepal can learn from our experiences. Sometimes it's good to go to the other side of the world for solutions to your own local issues.

Cost-Share Program Update

In 2013 the Commonwealth of Virginia initiated an unprecedented commitment to fund water quality improvements on livestock operations throughout the state. This effort culminated in the development of the only, completely state funded, 100%, livestock exclusion cost-share program in the history of the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program (VACS). As you can imagine, the response from the farming community was outstanding and the requests for cost share far exceeded the available funding. To meet this unprecedented demand for cost share, the General Assembly has allocated over \$50 million in funding over the last few years to address the back log of requests state wide, which exceeded \$65 million. Over the next several years, districts across the Commonwealth will be working with farmers to design and implement these practices, as funding becomes available. At each local district these practices are prioritized based on their environmental benefits and cost effectiveness.

Livestock exclusion BMPs are aimed at reducing streambank erosion and preventing nutrients and bacteria contained in animal manure from entering our waterways. Specifically, this program funds the development of livestock water systems, agricultural stream crossings, and livestock stream exclusion fencing.

Inevitably, when significant tax dollars are spent, programs are scrutinized, and the 100% cost share program was no exception. Indeed, even many that worked in the program questioned its rational. A common sentiment was that farmers needed to invest funds in the practices to demonstrate their interest, ownership and willingness to maintain the practices. But the reality is, these program participants will have

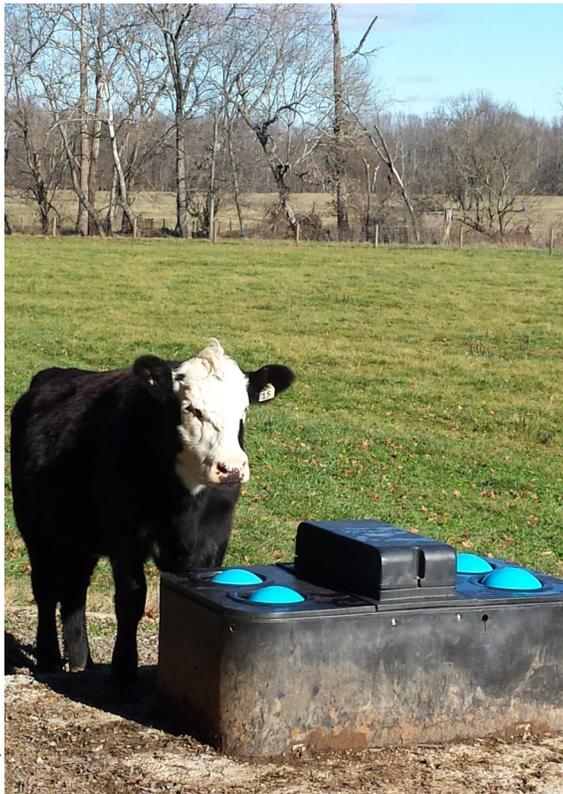
to front the money, hire the contractors, pay the contractors, then get reimbursed. After that, they are contractually required to maintain the practices for 10 years. This is a significant contribution in and of itself.

Controversy aside, there is one thing that is indisputable; participation was remarkably high and the resulting stream protection far exceeds previous year's accomplishments. In fact, farmers that have never been able to participate in our programs, due to the significant out of pocket expenses, have now come to the table to do their part to protect the environment. As sign up for the program came to an end in June of 2015, JMSWCD alone had about \$4 million dollars in requests for livestock stream exclusion practices.

In the end, the ultimate goal of VACS is to protect our rivers and streams from the manure and sediment associated with livestock operations. Local streams have benefited greatly from this work. Since 1985, when implementation began in Fauquier County, this program has protected over 345 miles of stream bank. This means cleaner local streams and far less pollutants being sent into the Chesapeake Bay. This is no doubt a positive outcome for all parties

involved. After July 1, 2015, the cost-share rate for these practices was reduced to 80%. This will make selling the BMPs much more challenging, but 80% is still a significant level of support. Like all good things, even 100% cost share, must come to an end.

For more information on this and other programs offered by the John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District, please call our office at (540) 347-3120 ext. 3. We look forward to working with you.



Frost-proof troughs can provide a good alternative to traditional water sources

John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District

98 Alexandria Pike, Suite 31
Warrenton, VA 20186
(540) 347-3120 x3
johnmarshall.swcd@vaswcd.org

www.johnmarshallswcd.com

Hours: 7:30 am-4:30 pm
Monday-Friday

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JMSWCD Summer Interns



My name is Alyson Breeding and I am an upcoming sophomore at Virginia Tech. I am majoring in Environmental Science with a focus in Water Quality, as of now. I have lived in Warrenton for the entirety of my life.

In my free time I like to go hiking and camping. While interning at JMSWCD, I hope to gain experience in all aspects of what is done in this field. I will be writing Cultural Resource and Threatened and Endangered Species Reviews, assisting with surveying and sampling, organizing and filing, while also doing other miscellaneous tasks around the office.



My name is Katie Clifford and I am a rising senior at Highland School as well as verbal lacrosse commit to Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. My hobbies include lacrosse, field hockey, and helping out

around our small farm. In college, I hope to major in either Public Health or Biology. At JMSWCD, I am learning about the basics of government funded programs, exploring environmental education as I help plan this year's exhibit for the county fair, and conducting research on cost-share programs for equine facilities.

Calendar of Events

July 1		Start of Fiscal Year—New Cost-Share program starts	
July 4		John Marshall SWCD Office Closed	
July 8	4:00 PM	John Marshall SWCD Board Meeting	CANCELLED
July 13-16		Fauquier County Fair	County Fairgrounds
August 10	4:00 PM	John Marshall SWCD Board Meeting	JMSWCD Office
September 5		John Marshall SWCD Office Closed	
September 14	4:00 PM	John Marshall SWCD Board Meeting	JMSWCD Office

Staying Connected: The John Marshall SWCD makes it easy to stay connected through social media. If you're on Facebook, "Like" our page to get updates on what's happening at the District.



The Conservation Strip is a quarterly publication of the John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District. To be added to our email list, please send an email to Jennifer Hoysa at: jennifer.hoysa@fauquiercounty.gov.

All programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status.