



The Conservation Strip

John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District

JMSWCD 50-Year Anniversary

Spring 2016

On May 10, 2016, the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District will celebrate its 50-year anniversary.

Fauquier County was originally part of the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District; however, in 1966, the county broke away and formed one of the first single-county districts as well as the first district to include incorporated towns. The first directors of the District were James Green, Edwin Gulick, Chilton Stone, Russell Tudor, and Lawrence Greene. Mr. Gulick was the longest serving director in the history of JMSWCD, serving from 1966 to 2001, a period of 36 years.

In the early days, one of the District's priorities was the building of flood control structures on Cedar run.

The District also wrote conservation plans and in 1969, began leasing a sod-corn planter to producers for \$2/acre. Sod corn planting was one of the earliest forms of no-till planting which has evolved significantly over the years.

In the 1970s and early 1980's, the District continued to work on building flood control structures and ultimately the German-

town Lake dam, and the Airlie dam were built.

In 1985, the program known today as the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share program began providing farmers with financial assistance to implement best management practices to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Additionally in the 1980's, the District purchased a mulcher spreader and a no-till seeder to rent to farmers.

In the 1990's and 2000's, the District continued to implement the cost-share program and began implementation of four Total Maximum Daily Load programs to clean up local streams.

The District will be having a 50-year anniversary celebration on May 10 from 5:30-7:30 pm in the John Barton Payne Building (2 Courthouse Square, Warrenton). The program will feature a history of the District and how it as well as agricultural production has changed in the past 50+ years. There will also be speakers from the early days of the District including some who were involved from the very beginning. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, contact the District at 540-347-3120 x3.



Our JMSWCD 50-year anniversary logo

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.



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Bring Back the Pollinators

by Kris Jarvis, John Marshall SWCD TMDL Specialist

Bring Back the Pollinators, a national campaign of the Xerces Society, is gaining momentum in Virginia as a variety of federal and state agencies, landscapers, nurseries and other groups address this critical conservation issue. Bees and other pollinators are fundamental to a healthy environment, yet their population is declining dramatically in many areas. Eighty-five percent of flowering plants, including many crops, need a pollinator to reproduce. Feeding the exponentially growing global human population makes pollinator health essential.

Landowners, large and small, have a role to play in pollinator restoration. The four basic components of the *Bring Back The Pollinators* are: 1) plant flowering plants, particularly natives as sources of food and shelter; 2) provide a home for growing pollinators by planting caterpillar host plants, leaving patches of bare ground and brush piles or installing nesting blocks; 3) tightly manage insecticide use and 4) help spread the word about pollinator conservation.

Online resources for homeowners who wish to provide pollinator habitat are abundant, including lists of top 10 plants for various locations and pollinator garden design templates. Information is available at <http://www.xerces.org/bringbackthepollinators/>; <http://www.nwf.org/>; <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/habitat/>; <http://vnps.org/>; and <http://www.plantmoreplants.com/> among other sites. Local nurseries who consistently reach out to landowners interested in this topic include Hill House Nursery in Rappahannock County (<http://hillhousenativeplants.com/>) and Piedmont Nursey in Markham (www.piedmontnursery.com).

Restoring pollinator habitat can contribute to a farmer's bottom line by enhancing crop pollination and yields. Even if the farm's main crop is not pollinator dependent, practices which enhance pollinator populations also attract other beneficial insects which aid natural pest suppression (a component of Integrated Pest Management). For information on *Improving Pest Management with Farmscaping*, see <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/ENTO/ENTO-52/ENTO-52-pdf.pdf>. Conservation practices that benefit pollinators may also improve water quality and soil health, replace weedy areas with high quality wildlife habitat, and contribute to farm beautification.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) assists farmers in the development of Pollinator and Benefi-



A Monarch butterfly. Photo: Hill House Native Plants

cial Insect Conservation Plans through their private lands biologists; however, there are several other agencies and organizations willing to assist in the technical assistance process. These conservation plans may include an assessment of existing pollinator habitat and opportunities for improvement, maps and templates for pollinator habitat projects, step-by-step implementation plans for wildflower meadows, cover crops, and hedgerows; pesticide risk assessment and strategies for mitigating impacts; and recommendations for natural pest suppression and invasive species control.

The NRCS brochure, *Farming for Pest Management*, advises that farmers begin by determining which beneficial insect species are most likely to aid in the control of the pests that infect their specific crops. They should know and map the farm habitats present, and manage the farm to attract and retain those natural enemies. Among the suggested conservation practices are: plant native trees and shrubs alone or in field borders; and create annual and perennial insectary strips as well as raised banks near fields which are planted with native bunch grasses. Cover crops and farm roads and alleys sown with buckwheat, clovers and sunflowers support crop pest predators and provide pollen. The *Bring Back the Pollinators* homepage (listed above) has a substantial agricultural section.

If you are in need of additional resources, you can contact Kris Jarvis, John Marshall SWCD TMDL Specialist, at 540-347-3120 x116.

John Marshall SWCD offers Urban Cost-Share

by Kris Jarvis, John Marshall SWCD TMDL Specialist

John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District (JMSWCD) is joining counterparts throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, in debuting the new Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP.) The program provides incentives for reducing stormwater pollution from urban and residential properties. Recently piloted in neighboring Culpeper and Thomas Jefferson SWCDs, VCAP operates in a similar manner as the agricultural cost share program, reimbursing eligible practices at 75% the allowable cost.

In developed areas, streets, parking lots, sidewalks and roofs have replaced a significant quantity of the historical permeable landscape. Urban Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as conservation landscaping (converting turf to native plants,) rain gardens and rain water harvesting increase the natural filtering capacity of a site. All non-

agricultural property owners, including residents, businesses and public facilities are eligible to apply for VCAP assistance. After the initial contact, a JMSWCD staff member will visit the site to review current conditions, potential water quality issues and the feasibility of installing various urban BMPs.

A conservation plan and design may be developed and submitted to the state VCAP committee which uses a ranking system to fund practices. If selected, the practice is installed, inspected and paid at the designated reimbursement rate. Property owners agree to maintain the practice for ten years. Several of the practices have the added benefit of enhancing habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife. For more information, contact Kris Jarvis at 540-347-3120 x112

A Celebration of Land and Water Conservation



Photo courtesy of The Piedmont Environmental Council

Come join John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District, Friends of the Rappahannock, and the Piedmont Environmental Council for From the Rappahannock, For the Rappahannock: A Celebration of Land and Water Conservation on April 9 at Marriott Ranch where we will celebrate land and water conservation successes.

Starting at 9:00 am, there will be a tree planting event where two acres will be planted in native trees and shrubs. From 1:00-4:30 pm, there will a lunch with fresh oysters

from the Oyster Company of Virginia, picnic fare, and local beer and wine. There will also be hay rides to tour conservation practices, an electrofishing demonstration, live music, fly tying demonstrations, and yard games.

Tickets are \$35 (children 14 and under admitted free) and can be purchased at <http://www.riverfriends.org/events>. For more information, contact Bryan Hofmann with Friends of the Rappahannock at bryan.hofmann@riverfriends.org.

John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District

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

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New Website Launched

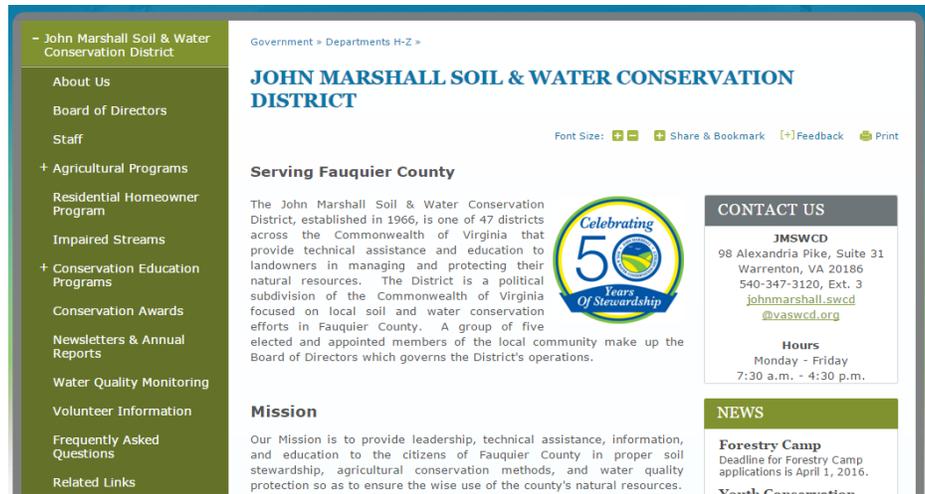
John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District's new website was launched on March 15. This revamp gives the District more control over the content and updates for the website and allows us to be able to add new features including signing up for District programs and workshops. Additionally, you will find a more organized layout. The new site will also display properly on tablet and cellular devices.

But while some things have changed, others haven't. For example, you can still reach us by visiting:

www.johnmarshallswcd.com.

We hope you enjoy our new site and if you have any comments or feedback, please send them to:

johnmarshall.swcd@vaswcd.org.



Calendar of Events

April 9	9:00 AM	From the Rappahannock, For the Rappahannock	Marriott Ranch
April 13	4:00 PM	John Marshall SWCD Board Meeting	JMSWCD Office
May 10	5:30 PM	John Marshall 50-Year Anniversary Celebration	John Barton Payne Building
May 11	4:00 PM	John Marshall SWCD Board Meeting	JMSWCD Office
May 30		John Marshall SWCD Office Closed	
June 8	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.