



Virginia Chapter Newsletter - Fall 2000

Virginia Chapter President's Message: Wade Biddix, President

Gene Yagow did a great job as President this past year. He left big shoes to fill. He was always very organized at Council meetings and worked very hard to guide the Chapter and keep us informed. I'm glad Gene will still be part of the Council for another year as Past President. He will be a ready source of support and information. Thanks Gene for a job well done!

I'm not too superstitious, but getting sworn in as President on Friday the 13th gave me reason to wonder. Hopefully this is not going to be a Freddie-type nightmare experience this year. Seriously though, I'm honored to be President of the Virginia Chapter of SWCS. We have just had one of our most successful years – with excellent turnouts at our last three technical conferences. The topics for those conferences were **TMDL Planning and Implementation in Virginia, Benthic Impairments and TMDLs** and **Animal Feeding Operations**. Issues such as these are pertinent to a varied audience. We had representatives from various agencies (state, Federal and local), students, universities, landowners, watershed groups, and consultants. It is appropriate for SWCS to be involved in these issues. We plan to continue sponsoring similar forums to discuss timely natural resource issues in Virginia.

If you have an issue or idea for a future technical forum, please contact me so it can be considered. We have a Technical Meeting and Self Development Committee to research and discuss possible meeting themes. Some proposed topics on the table are: 1) Lessons Learned from the First Round of Virginia Fecal Coliform TMDLs; 2) The Applicability of Existing Water Quality Standards to Nonpoint Source Pollution; 3) Alternative Septic Systems for Residential and Small Rural Communities; and 4) a follow-up to Animal Feeding Operations Forum. Decisions will be made soon for the upcoming year so let your voices be heard.

There are many environmental challenges facing us here in the Commonwealth. The Virginia Chapter of SWCS is 175 members strong. Through our combined efforts we **can** make a difference. We need everyone's support and involvement in order to grow and prosper as a Chapter and to meet the goals and objectives of SWCS.

I want to challenge you this year to become active in SWCS. How do you do that? Here's how:

- ?? Do something good for conservation
- ?? Come to the SWCS meetings and network with others
- ?? Recruit a new member or
- ?? Contact the Council with your ideas, issues and concerns so that we can address them.

We are all busy these days. However, we should never be too busy to do something for soil and water conservation. We can all contribute to the SWCS. Get involved. That's how you get your money's worth out of this organization. We should do what we can to improve the earth for future generations. For those of us involved in natural resources, it is our life's work and a very worthwhile cause.

I am committed to SWCS and look forward to the upcoming year. I will try to keep you informed and involved in our many activities. Please contact me if I can help you in any way.

SWCS Annual Meeting Report, Ginger Kopp, President Elect

On Friday October 13, 2000 the Chapter held another successful annual meeting at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton VA. The theme was Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs). Dennis Treacy, Director, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), as the Keynote Speaker related a message of the importance of working together to handle the confusing array

of rules, regulations, programs and technology. The diverse crowd of 85 was made up of agency professionals from state and federal governments, university professors and students, agri-business consultants, poultry, dairy and pork farmer organizations, other farmer groups and animal producers.

The morning program consisted of representatives from the DEQ and Department of Conservation and Recreation and USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service explaining their rules, regulations and programs concerning AFOs. This gave the audience and idea of how these agencies are pulling together to help farmers stay in compliance of the state and federal legislation. These speakers also informed the audience how to obtain assistance from these organizations on their AFO programs and technological expertise. The afternoon program focused on new and developing technologies that will help animal producers manage their waste cleanly, cheaply and efficiently.

This was the first comprehensive AFO program held in the state. Once again the annual meeting was a success and showed the leadership capabilities of the chapter in addressing policy, procedure and technological advances for current issues in soil and water conservation.

Virginia Chapter SWCS Annual Meetings Scheduled – Mark Your Calendars!

At the Virginia Chapter SWCS Council meeting on Monday, December 11, 2000 in Staunton the Chapter officers and attending committee members developed a meeting schedule for 2001.

The Summer Tour meeting will be merged with a technical conference that will be held on **April 25, 2001** in Richmond. Dawn Shank (dshank@dcr.state.va.us) will chair this conference. The theme of the conference will be Land Application of Biosolids and Animal Waste.

The Annual Meeting of the Virginia Chapter will be held on **October 16-17, 2001** (location to be determined) with a theme on Alternative Septic Systems. This will be a two day conference with an awards ceremony and business meeting. Kilby Majette (kilby.majette@vaquinton.fsc.usda.gov) will be chair this meeting.

If anyone wants to assist with these activities, please contact Dawn or Kilby.

Virginia Chapter SWCS Annual Meeting Awards, Lisa Sizemore, Awards Committee.

Merit Award -Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited has been an active partner in restoring and enhancing wetlands in Virginia. Several thousand acres of wetlands have been restored or enhanced on private lands as a result of their efforts. When you think of Ducks Unlimited in Virginia, you automatically think of Program Biologist, David Sausville. David's knowledge of biological systems and his willingness to assist landowners make him very effective when getting conservation on the ground. His can-do attitude was recently demonstrated on projects in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake. David not only secured a tractor and terracer to construct shallow water impoundments, he actually operated the equipment to save the landowner time and money.

Ducks Unlimited in Virginia is a valued partner among state and federal conservation agencies. Their contributions of technical assistance, funds, and equipment are making a significant impact on improving water quality and enhancing wildlife habitat across the Commonwealth. Congratulations to David and Ducks Unlimited!

Merit Award - Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's Education Committee

When you have the right mix of talent, imagination, and getting-it-done spirit, there isn't anything you can't do. The following group proves just that. As members of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's Education Committee, this subcommittee was comprised of Sandy Greene--Headwaters SWCD, Stephanie Martin--VASWCD, Pat Paul and Cephas Hobbs--NRCS, and Dawn Shank, DCR. They combined their respective geniuses to pull together this year's education package for Natural Resources Conservation Week.

Called "Community Waters," the package was distributed to Virginia's 46 soil and water conservation districts for use by teachers and anyone else interested in conservation. Sandy adapted and developed activities and materials for elementary and middle schoolers -- Wetlands Café Game for fourth graders and "Community Waters Dilemma: Cave Mountain Springs" for seventh graders, with special thanks to Project Wild for being able to include Marsh Munchers and Dragonfly Pond as part of the package. The group took special pains to tie the information to Virginia's Standards of Learning to increase its likelihood of being used.

Also included are public service announcements, news releases, and teacher letters for localization. Pat, Stephanie and Dawn coordinated closely on the writing and graphic look of these items, with Dawn shepherding the proclamation through for the Governor's signature. Another component is a CD with digital images so that people can print out as many sets as needed in their community. Cephas was largely responsible for the production end of the entire package--it wouldn't exist without his expertise and dedication to the project.

The bookmark in the set contains this quote from Charles Dickens, which is particularly appropriate given our topic today: "When you drink of the water, don't forget the spring from which it flows."

Thank you all for your time and talents for the benefit of conservation education. Through your efforts, a new generation of children will grow as conservationists and become responsible stewards of our land. Congratulations on a beautiful and useful education package!

Merit Award – Virginia Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Team

CREP, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, is one of the best programs ever developed to help farmers and landowners "farm the best and buffer the rest." NRCS, FSA, and DCR chose four special people to coordinate the beginning of CREP here in the Commonwealth. Bobby Whitescarver, NRCS, Verona, John Myers, NRCS and Carolyn Felts, FSA, State Office, Richmond, and Lee Hill, DCR, Richmond, are all playing a major role in making CREP a reality for us. CREP has been in a few pilot states, but every situation is inherently different, so the group had to start from scratch to develop Virginia's program.

This foursome worked aggressively and tirelessly to overcome obstacles they encountered as they blended policies, guidelines and regulations of federal and state agencies into one program. Adding complexity to their challenge was a new and unique opportunity to allow non-profit organizations to provide additional cost-share funds to participating landowners. This was unheard of in any previous USDA cost-share program. In Virginia, Ducks Unlimited and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation stepped forward to provide funding. Virginia Department of Forestry is also an integral player in CREP because many of the buffers include tree planting and enough tree seedlings need to be available to meet demand. Another challenge was insuring the program complemented the priorities of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the Southern Rivers.

When all the parties finally reached an agreement, they had amassed 90 million dollars to establish 35,000 acres of buffers and acquire 8,000 acres of easements surrounding springheads, creeks and streams across the state. This group's task didn't conclude with signing the agreement and initiating the program. They are now providing statewide training to all the program's sponsors.

For their dedication to meet these innovative challenges and their endurance to continue until they fulfill their mission, we recognize Bobby Whitescarver, John Myers, Carolyn Felts and Lee Hill. Congratulations on a major accomplishment for conservation in Virginia!

Honor Award – Wade Biddix

Wade Biddix has been an active and contributing member of SWCS for over a decade. Wade receives this special award in recognition his work on several Chapter events during 1999 and 2000. Wade was instrumental in the success of last year's Annual Meeting on "Water Quality and Total Maximum Daily Load Development (TMDL) in Virginia." The topic was timely and making headlines because EPA was implementing new policy that all states are required to follow. A host of expert presenters from universities, government agencies and the private sector as well as exceptional publicity drew the highest attendance of any in recent history to this meeting. Visiting, non-members of SWCS made up a significant portion of the audience and provided an excellent chance to network with a broader range of people interested in the subject. This informative meeting provided extremely positive exposure to our Chapter, and we gained several new members as a result. The success of the annual meeting led to the Chapter hosting a second event called "TMDL Development for Benthic Impairments" in April. SWCS enjoyed similar success in attendance, Chapter recognition, networking and increased membership with the spring meeting.

Wade's organization and attention to detail helps ensure successful meetings--making it fun to work with him on planning and promoting these kinds of events as well as on other projects. Wade is the incoming SWCS president and the Virginia Chapter SWCS looks forward to his leadership and another stellar year for the Virginia Chapter. Congratulations, Wade!

Merit Award – NRCS Service Unit 11

Put together four Service Centers, one Resource Conservation & Development area, four soil and water conservation districts, two cities, and six counties and what do you get? Service Unit 11--NRCS's "Shining Star" for getting conservation on the ground through excellent coordination and customer service. Over the last 4 years, the folks in the southwest part of Virginia have been extremely active in seeking out funding for conservation measures, planning with local landowners, obligating cost-share dollars, and providing technical assistance to apply the needed conservation practices. This to the tune of nearly 4 million dollars! They've accomplished this through extraordinary teamwork among themselves and with their customers. The team has administered 5 EQIP priority areas, 3 PL-566 Land Treatment Watershed projects, several EPA 319 and Virginia WQIA projects. They also find the time to work with TVA and their neighbors in Tennessee on water quality projects. In addition, they've been state leaders in grazing lands initiatives and organized many new grazing groups. New River-Highlands RC&D extends the level of expertise to this area on a regional basis--they marshal even more forces and energy to the activities in which you're all involved.

The person heading up Service Unit 11 is Gene Harris. Through his leadership, the strengths and talents of the entire team have been channeled into top production, far exceeding goals and expectations. Gene and his group are an inspiration to all conservationists. SWCS highly commends this group for outstanding customer service and their conservation accomplishments in southwest Virginia. Congratulations for a job well done!

1999 Chapter Achievement Award, Presented by the Soil and Water Conservation Society

The Virginia Chapter received this award for the 3rd time! We were recognized for the fall 1999 TMDL meeting described previously, which Wade Biddix chaired. SWCS noted three key items that made this an award-winning event: a good program with broad-based interest and appeal; starting publicity early, including as many contacts/sources/media as possible and repeating the advertisement often -- up until the day of the meeting; and starting early with subcommittee chairs to be involved and stay on schedule. Congratulations to Gene Yagow, Mary Leigh Wolfe--past president and Wade Biddix for earning this national recognition for the Virginia Chapter!

SWCS Membership Report: Wade Biddix, Former Membership Chairperson

Year 2000 membership activities included the following:

- ?? Updated membership database by working with Ankeny.
- ?? Separated Virginia Chapter members from DC Chapter members.
- ?? Received monthly termination lists from Ankeny. Contacted these members via phone, e-mail or direct mailings to encourage them to renew their memberships.
- ?? Recruited new members using the following methods:
 - o Had SWCS Booth at Association of SWCD's meeting, and technical meetings.
 - o Contacted all non-SWCS participants at the TMDL and Benthic Workshops to ask them to join SWCS.
 - o Sent out recruitment packages to several perspective members.
- ?? Contacted all current members to request their e-mail addresses.
- ?? Developed a listserve of all SWCS members with e-mail.
- ?? Contacted membership via e-mail and hard copy regarding Chapter activities.
- ?? Maintained SWCS Master Membership Rosters and compared previous month's list with current month's list to identify new terminations and new additions to list.
- ?? Notified Newsletter Editor of new members.
- ?? Initiated development of a Student Chapter at UVA.

The following membership changes occurred from June 15, 2000 to September 29, 2000. The current membership total on 9/29/00 for the Virginia SWCS Chapter was 175. Please welcome these new members to the society and encourage those who have not renewed to renew their membership.

New or Added Members:

Jerry Bernard – Stafford
Laura Jaroszewski – Arlington
Harold Klæge – Woodbridge
Robert Melby – Winchester
Barbara Osgood – Fairfax
Garth Youngberg – Arlington

Terminations:

Mike Anderson – Manassas
Paul Brant – Charlottesville
Arthur Bryant - Woodbridge
John Clay - Mechanicsville
Sam Gehr - Alexandria
Jonathan Hawes – Richmond
Richard Roth – Blacksburg
Nelson Thurman – Springfield
Amber Williams – Nichelsville (Student)

SWCS Membership Renewal

It's now even easier to renew your Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) membership. The SWCS website can now take online payments for membership in the Society. The SWCS encourages renewal by sending out renewal notices to remind members that their membership will be terminated if payment isn't made. But with each renewal, it hasn't been just one slip of paper going to each member informing them of their lapsed membership, the current process involves four letters to each member before membership is terminated. October is the beginning of a four-month onslaught of member terms expiring, so it's the hope of the SWCS staff to help these people out. SWCS wants to make it as easy as possible for you to renew your membership. Just log on www.swcs.org <<http://www.swcs.org>> and go to the "Membership" section of the website. You can pay by credit card in a secure environment in a manner of minutes. No postage, no writing a check, no driving the envelope to the post office. Headquarters will be sending instructions with the first renewal notice and via email announcements. At this time, membership dues are the only online payment SWCS can accept, but look for announcements for online payments for publications and other products in the future.

SWCS Southeast Region Chapter Development Workshop – Mark Your Calendars!

Begin planning now for the Southeast Regional Chapter Development Workshop scheduled for **March 30-31, 2001** in Burlington, NC. The meeting will begin with dinner on March 30 and end in mid-afternoon on the 31st. The purpose of the workshop is to develop new ideas and skill within each chapter so that we are better prepared to build strong programs that meet the needs of our members and advance the cause of soil and water conservation. It's also a good opportunity to exchange ideas between chapters. The workshop is intended for officers, committee leaders, and any other interested SWCS members. Registration information and program information will be sent to chapter presidents in early 2001. If there is a particular topic that you would like to see covered, please contact Jean Steiner (jsteiner@arches.uga.edu or 706-769-5731, extension 203).

Questions or comments concerning chapter activities? Contact the appropriate officer or committee chairperson:

Officers

Wade Biddix	wade.biddix@va.usda.gov	President
Ginger Kopp	virginia.kopp@va.usda.gov	President Elect
Kilby Majette	kilby.majette@vaquinton.fsc.usda.gov	Vice President
Kathy Harris	kathy.harris@vachristia.fsc.usda.gov	Secretary
Larry Wilkinson	stumptown3@juno.com	Treasurer
Dawn Shank	dshank@dcr.state.va.us	2nd Year Council Member
Stu Wilson	mailto:swilson@dcr.state.va.us	1st Year Council Member
Gene Yagow	eyagow@vt.edu	Past President

Committee Chairpersons

Dawn Shank	dshank@dcr.state.va.us	Summer Tour
Don Wells	dwells1943@aol.com	Legislative
Gary Boring	gary.boring@vawythevil.fsc.usda.gov	Technical Meetings/Self Development, Nominating
Ginger Kopp	virginia.kopp@va.usda.gov	Membership
Ken Carter	ken.carter@va.usda.gov	Elections
Kilby Majette	kilby.majette@vaquinton.fsc.usda.gov	Annual Meeting
Lisa Sizemore	lisa.sizemore@va.usda.gov	Awards
Mary Leigh Wolfe	mlwolfe@vt.edu	Budget Committee
Theo Dillaha	dillaha@vt.edu	Student Chapter, Newsletter, Homepage

Virginia Chapter SWCS Treasurers Report: Sept. 25, 1999 – Sept. 26, 2000

CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE ON SEPTEMBER 24, 1999	\$ 6,431.38
Income	
Dues	\$712.00
Interest on checking	\$117.79
1999 Annual meeting registration	\$1,790.00
2000 Summer meeting registration	<u>\$2,000.41</u>
Total	\$4,620.20
Expenses	
Postage	\$118.80
1999 Annual meeting expenses	\$1,738.91
State Corporation Commission annual registration fee	\$25.00
VASWCD 2000 Envirothon support	\$500.00
Virginia Tech Student Chapter, SWCS Annual Meeting travel expenses support	\$500.00
SWCD meeting support	<u>\$25.00</u>
Total	\$3,775.95
CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE AS OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2000	\$7,275.73
SAVINGS ACCOUNT BALANCES	
CD-10/11/00, matures 04/15/01	\$15,492.08
Savings account-09/30/00	<u>\$213.39</u>
Total	\$15,505.47

If you'd like to get your newsletter electronically and save the SWCS some money and eliminate printing and paper trash, send your email address to Theo Dillaha at dillaha@vt.edu and we'll send you your next newsletter over the Internet.

Legislative News, Don Wells, Legislative Committee

LUCAS BILL SIGNED INTO LAW

On November 9, President Clinton signed the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Act, originally sponsored by Frank Lucas (R-6th/OK) as a stand-alone bill. Although it sailed through both houses of Congress earlier, the original bill was held up at the eleventh hour by a controversial amendment. To circumvent the blockade, Senate leaders incorporated the bill into H.R. 4788, the Grain Standards and Warehouse Act of 2000, which contained crucial provisions sought by the House, Senate and White House.

The House passed H.R. 4788 on October 17th, with the Senate following suit on the 24th. Section 313 of the Grain Standards bill includes all of the Lucas bill except Title II, which would have extended rehab efforts to Army Corps of Engineers Works Project Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) dams.

The statute authorizes \$90 million for five years, FY2001-2005, although no money was appropriated in the FY 2001 agriculture appropriations bill. The following are the main provisions of the bill:

- ?? Applicable to existing dams in PL-566, PL-534, Pilot or RC&D projects.
- ?? All rehabilitation work must result in a dam that meets current NRCS and state dam safety standards.
- ?? The state dam safety agency must be involved in the application process.
- ?? Funds may not be used for operation and maintenance (O&M) activities.
- ?? If the need for rehabilitation is the result of inadequate O&M, the site will not be eligible for rehabilitation fund.
- ?? A ranking system for approval of applications by the Secretary must be developed.

NRCS personnel are developing draft policy and procedures to implement a rehabilitation program. Drafts will soon be available for review and comment by state staffs and organizations such as NACD. Additional information can be found at <http://www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/pl566/agingwater/infra.html>. (November 21, 2000: Weekly news briefs from the National Association of Conservation Districts)

Virginia Tech SWCS Student Chapter Report, Mindy Waltham, President

The Virginia Tech student chapter has been very busy this semester! Cheryl Szeles and Mindy Waltham have been actively pursuing our Save Our Streams Certification, and expect to be certified in January. The students made a trip to Apple Ridge Farm, an educational facility designed to teach children about the environment and performed several hours of trail maintenance. A return trip is planned for the spring semester. A membership drive is also planned for the spring.

As members of the Environmental Coalition here at the University, the Chapter is currently working on plans for Earth Week in April, as well as our on going Sustainability Project. The Sustainability Project is an effort to collect the items thrown out by students moving out of their dorms and apartments, and make useable items and furniture available to students from overseas when they arrive in the summer. The Chapter is currently evaluating the dorms and apartment complexes in the area so that we can try out the project in one apartment complex and one large dorm or small community of dorms on campus. We are also working with the local YMCA store to try to set up a voucher and delivery program to deliver items once they are collected. For Earth Week, we are trying to acquire funding to bring Ralph Nader to campus as our keynote speaker. We hope to have solar cars on display on the Drillfield for a day during Earth Week, as well as doing a trash sort of some university trash to display the large quantities of recyclable materials that are thrown out at the University.

Virginia Chapter SWCS Home Page

Have you checked out the Virginia Chapter SWCS Home Page recently? It contains a variety of information useful to chapter members and others. One of the newest editions is a listing of all chapter members and how to contact them. The home page address is: <http://www.eng.vt.edu/eng/bse/swcs>.

Newsletter and Home Page Contributions are Needed!

Contributions to the Virginia Chapter newsletter and home page are always appreciated. If you have a meeting to promote or something else of interest to SWCS members, please mail it to Theo Dillaha, 310 Seitz Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0303 or e-mail it to dillaha@vt.edu. The next newsletter will come out in March 2001.

SWCS Calendar

December 11, 2000: SWCS council meeting, 10am to noon, DCR Office (next to Shoney's Motel), Staunton. For more information, contact Wade Biddix <wade.biddix@va.usda.gov>

January 7-9, 2001: Integrated Decision-Making for Watershed Management Symposium, Chevy Chase, MD. For more information, see the website <http://www.vt.edu/watershed.htm> or contact Mary Leigh Wolfe, 540-231-6092, mlwolfe@vt.edu

February 27, 2001: Virginia Chapter SWCS Council Meeting

March 11-13, 2001 Virginia Lakes and Watershed Conference, Fredericksburg

March 30-31, 2001 Southeast Region SWCS Chapter Development Workshop, Best Western Burlington Inn, 770 Huffman Mill Road, Burlington, NC 27215, 336-584-0151

April 25, 2001: Virginia Chapter SWCS Conference Land Application of Biosolids and Animal Waste, Richmond. Contact Dawn Shank (dshank@dcr.state.va.us), conference chairperson for more information or to volunteer to help.

May 19-23, 2001: National Watershed Coalition Meeting, Richmond

June 19, 2001: Virginia Chapter SWCS Council Meeting

August 4-8 , 2001: Soil and Water Conservation Society 2001 Annual Conference. Kingston Plantation, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. For more general information, including hotel information and more about the Myrtle Beach area, click the following link: <http://swcs.tripod.com/2001.html>

September 18, 2001: Virginia Chapter SWCS Council Meeting

October 16-17, 2001: Annual Meeting of the Virginia Chapter, Theme: Alternative Septic Systems, location to be announced. This will be a two-day conference with an awards ceremony and business meeting. Contact Kilby Majette (kilby.majette@vaquinton.fsc.usda.gov), conference chairperson for more information or to volunteer to help.