



Virginia Chapter Newsletter - Fall 2001

Virginia Chapter President's Message: Wade Biddix, President

The Virginia Chapter of SWCS was well represented at the Annual SWCS Meeting held in Myrtle Beach, SC from August 4-8, 2001. Other members in attendance with me included Gene Yagow, Theo Dillaha (with his wife and daughter), Jim Speckhart, Gene Crabtree, Ray Dorsett, and Denise Doetzer. The five Virginia Tech student members attending were Amy Bowman, Mindy Waltham, Kirsten Egger, Carly Gagen-Cheeny and Essra Dillaha. We enjoyed a fantastic meeting and learned a lot in a nice, comfortable location for a summer conference.

Many of the Virginia members volunteered and assisted the South Carolina Chapter with the conference. Our efforts were much appreciated by the host chapter. Thanks to everyone that helped.

Congratulations! The Virginia Chapter was recognized at the meeting as the Outstanding Chapter in the Southeast for 2000. Also, the Virginia Community Waters Program, sponsored by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, received one of five Merit Awards presented at the meeting. I accepted both awards on behalf of the Virginia Chapter. These will be shared at the Virginia Chapter's Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet on October 23-24, 2001 in Blacksburg.

At the meeting, Craig Cox addressed the group and discussed the Society's advocacy roles during the last year. Many presentations and discussions have taken place in Washington DC to further the efforts of conservation and the protection of our natural resources. These efforts seem to be making a significant difference based on the number and type of new legislation dealing with conservation. Craig and his staff are doing all they can to better position the SWCS as a lead contact for factual and reliable information on conservation matters. This approach was strongly supported by the Chapter delegates at the meeting. He also mentioned that the "Conservation Voices" will be combined with the "Soil and Water Conservation Journal" beginning in 2002. We'll hear more about this from Ankeny soon.

Here are a few recent accomplishments of the Virginia Chapter of SWCS.

- Provided two \$1,000 scholarships to college students through the Virginia Association of SWCD's Education Foundation.
- Supported the Virginia Envirothon with a \$500 donation.
- Conducted a technical forum on Biosolids and Water Quality at the Pocahontas State Park that was attended by about 65 people.
- Supported the Conservation Career Night at Virginia Tech with a \$200 donation.
- Held quarterly SWCS council meetings.
- Published and distributed a quarterly SWCS Newsletter to keep our members informed.
- Wrote letters of advocacy and support for conservation to state and national legislators.

I am proud to be a member of SWCS and for the contributions we are making as an organization to the conservation of our natural resources in the Commonwealth. Through our combined efforts we can and do 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. Tell others about SWCS and encourage them to join our organization.

Mark your calendars now!! On October 23-24, 2001, we will host our Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet in Blacksburg, Virginia. The theme of the technical workshop at the meeting will be Alternative Septic Systems (see detailed information provided in the newsletter). You don't want to miss this. I look forward to seeing you there.

I have recently started a new job as Supervisory District Conservationist located in Goochland Service Center. I am feeling a bit overwhelmed at the present but I am excited about being back in the field doing conservation work. My new phone number is (804) 556-4125, ext. 3. My e-mail address is wade.biddix@vagoochlan.fsc.usda.gov. Please contact me if I can help you in any way.

2001 Virginia Chapter SWCS Annual Meetings Scheduled – Mark Your Calendars!

The Virginia Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society (VASWCS) is honored to host an Alternative Septic System Workshop for its 2001 Annual Meeting. The workshop is scheduled for October 23-24, 2001, at the Best Western Red Lion Inn in Blacksburg, Virginia. This workshop will provide a forum for people who want to insure that water quality concerns are addressed in the future. With the pressure of finding new land for housing developments that are independent of centralized sewer systems and with older septic systems often failing, this conference will bring together a group of professionals that will discuss their experiences in alternative septic systems. This conference will show how communities can protect one of our most important natural resource – water. The two-day conference will

focus on topics that address the design, construction, maintenance, community planning, funding, new technology, assessing watershed and soil conditions for different types of alternative septic systems. There will also be an opportunity to discuss basic engineering design principals, listen to several case studies, visit with exhibitors, and participate in panel discussions with the presenters. The Virginia Chapter has compiled a group of speakers that are from all aspects of the alternative septic system arena. The workshop is open to anyone who wants to learn more about Alternative Septic Systems. The brochure/registration form is posted at the [VASWCS website](http://www.vaswcs.org). The annual meeting program and registration information are available at <http://www.bse.vt.edu/swcs/2001AM.pdf>. A workshop announcement and registration form is also appended to this newsletter. For more additional information on the meeting or to volunteer to help with the meeting, contact either Kilby D. Majette at (804) 932 – 4376 ext. 101, Kilby.Majette@vaquinton.fsc.usda.gov or Gary Boring at (540) 228 – 2879, Gary.Boring@vawythevil.fsc.usda.gov. **IMPORTANT!!! We are going to have an auction during the social hour before the Awards Dinner to raise money for chapter activities. Please bring items to donate for the auction.**

New SWCS Members, Ginger Kopp, President Elect and Membership Chair

Please be sure to welcome our newest members: the Northern Neck Soil and Water Conservation District (membership submitted by Junius Berger, NNSWCD Board Member), Ron Wood, Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department, Charlotte Burnett from DCR/DSWC, and Charles Hagedorn of Virginia Tech.

Unfortunately, several chapter memberships have also lapsed. If you happen to see or work with one of the following members, please encourage them to continue their membership, Jay Gilliam, Bruce G. Jones and Rick Williams.

New membership brochures have also been issued. Please throw out all the old membership brochures! If you need new brochures please call me. If you know that they have moved out of the Chapter area, please inform me, Ginger Kopp either by phone 804-520-7229 x102 or email virginia.kopp@va.usda.gov. Our current Virginia Chapter membership is 162 and we have a goal of increasing that to 170 by the end of the year.

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.

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	kadjbh@aol.com	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: Jan. 26, 2001 – Aug. 28, 2001

CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE ON Jan. 26, 2001	\$ 6,735.75
Income	
Interest on checking	\$60.81
Biosolids Meeting Registration	\$2,620.00
SWCS Chapter dues	<u>\$694.00</u>
Total	\$3,374.81
Expenses	

Treasurer of Virginia – Biosolids meeting site deposit	\$100.00
Ginger Kopp Postage	\$34.25
Biosolids meeting supplies	\$79.98
Wade Biddix Postage	\$6.80
Leadership workshop expenses	\$91.82
SWCS SE Regional Chapter Development Workshop expenses	\$20.38
Kilby Magette SWCS SE Regional Chapter Development Workshop expenses	\$98.27
Dawn Shank Biosolids meeting food	\$684.53
Virginia Tech Student Chapter – Careers in Conservation Workshop sponsorship	<u>\$188.28</u>
Total	\$1,304.32

CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE AS OF Aug. 28, 2001	\$8,806.24
OTHER ACCOUNT BALANCES	
CD-01/26/01, matured 04/15/01	\$15,844.78
Savings account-June 30, 2001	<u>\$216.40</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$24,867.42

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.

2001 Virginia and National Envirothon Results, Dana Roberts, Envirothon Coordinator

Congratulations to the Harrisonburg High School Envirothon team that represented Virginia & the Shenandoah SWCD at the 2001 Canon National Envirothon. They placed 15th in the Nationals. The competition was held at Hinds Community College in Raymond, Mississippi from July 24-29, 2001. Envirothon students took a close look at Urban Nonpoint Source Pollution as they competed in the State Envirothon Competition. Envirothon combines in-class study with hands-on field experiences, examining the role people play in environmental issues. Envirothon is a natural resources competition for high school students. Envirothon promotes a desire for students to learn more about the natural environment and the stewardship of our natural resources.

Teams of five students compete in the areas of soils, forestry, aquatics, and wildlife. The students have been studying Urban Nonpoint Source Pollution in the Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Districts to identify potential and/or existing environmental problems. During the oral presentation component of the competition, teams are given the opportunity to propose a management solution to a panel of judges. (The panel consists of industry and natural resource professionals.)

The Virginia Envirothon was held May 20-21, 2001 at the Smith Mountain Lake 4H Educational Center in Wirtz, Virginia, where seventeen teams competed. The state champions, Harrisonburg High School, represented Virginia at the International Envirothon and placed 15th, as mentioned above. The second place team, Amelia County High School, will represent Virginia at the National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Convention in Louisville, Kentucky October 24-27, 2001.

If you would like to know more about starting an Envirothon team at your high school, through 4-H, FFA, Ecology Club or home school group, contact the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts at (804) 559-0324 or VASWCD@erols.com. The Virginia Chapter of the SWCS was a cosponsor to the 2001 Virginia Envirothon with a \$500 donation.

FARM BILL UPDATE – Adapted from NACD eNotes from NACD Sept. 18, 2001

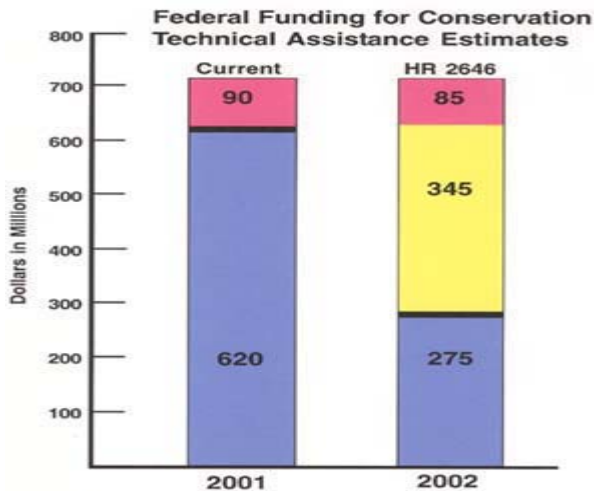
Problems with the Redirection of Technical Assistance and Delegation of Authority

The conservation title of the H. R. 2646 reauthorizes and increases federal funding for a number of important financial assistance programs, but at the same time significantly reduces landowners' access to technical assistance to implement comprehensive conservation systems and practices.

Currently USDA, State Conservation Agencies and local conservation districts work collaboratively in providing farmers and ranchers with conservation technical assistance. Through the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 590(a)), USDA partners with state and local governments and others to help farmers and ranchers plan and install needed conservation practices.

The Conservation Title of the House Agriculture Committee's Farm Bill would de-couple and destroy this shared federal, state and local conservation technical assistance delivery system by limiting USDA technical services primarily to producers who participate in federal land retirement or cost-share programs. NACD estimates that under the House Agriculture Committee's Farm Bill proposal, up to 90% of the nation's agricultural producers could lose most or all of the conservation technical assistance they currently receive from USDA.

In addition to the problem of re-directing inadequate amounts of technical assistance, H.R. 2646 eliminates the authority for the Secretary to delegate administration and implementation of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) by assigning the program to the Farm Service Agency in statute. Conservation districts believe that the Secretary should retain the authority to determine which USDA agency should be responsible for administering and implementing the department's conservation programs.



- TA for producers who practice conservation without federal financial assistance
- TA for producers who participate in federal cost share or land retirement programs (CCC funds)
- TA for producers who participate in federal cost share or land retirement programs (redirected CTA Program funds)

Summary: Under the current provisions of H.R. 2646:

- The vast majority of the nation's farmers, ranchers and other land managers would no longer receive technical assistance from NRCS.
- NRCS's role could be narrowed to only providing technical assistance to support producers who participate in **federal** cost share and land retirement programs. Significant geographic areas would no longer receive conservation technical assistance.
- The nation's combined federal-state-local funded private lands conservation delivery system delivered through conservation districts would be destroyed.
- Conservation district resources now used to support the implementation of federal conservation programs would be redirected to support state and local programs and priorities.
- EQIP would be administered within USDA's Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services mission area rather than the logical place for it to be, the department's Natural Resources and Environment mission area.

Solutions: To address the technical assistance problems created by the proposed H.R. 2646 conservation title, the following changes are needed:

- Adequate funding must be provided in the proposed CCC technical assistance program account to properly support the CCC financial assistance programs authorized in the bill.
- Responsibility for managing conservation programs within USDA must be retained by USDA's conservation agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- Authority for assigning program administration and implementation to the appropriate USDA mission area must be retained by the Secretary.

Additional Information on the Farm Bill from Gene Whitaker, Farm Bill Network, Sept 17, 2001

As Congress now focuses on responding to the catastrophe, floor action on the Farm Bill is unlikely any time soon. It appears that the House has postponed for an indefinite period any action HR 2646 (the 2002 Farm Bill approved by the House Ag Committee) or any other reauthorization bill.

There has been a growing support to substitute to HR 2646's conservation title with one being developed by Representatives Ron Kind (D-WI), Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), Wayne Gilchrist (R-MD). Although a draft has yet to be released, it will provide additional conservation funding and many of the provisions of HR 2375 that was introduced by Rep. Kind several months ago and now has 138 listed cosponsors. I will keep you informed of any updates.

How fiscal year 2002 years appropriations bill will now proceed is very uncertain. If new appropriations bill with the necessary authorizations are not passed, WRP, WHIP, and FPP will not be funded next year. They are not provided for in the House approved FY 2002 bill nor in the Senate Ag. Committee approved bill. In addition the Senate bill would limit the CRP signups (regular, continuous, CREP, and the wetlands pilot) to no more than 340,000 acres effectively bring those programs to a halt within a few months.

It is critical to get the US economy back on a steady footing and to eliminate terrorism. However, we all need to maintain and grow our efforts to obtaining funding for the conservation programs for Fiscal Year starting in two (2) weeks and to keep conservation a principle focus to the next Farm Bill.

Concerned about the Farm Bill and the future of conservation in America? Maybe it is time for individual SWCS members to contact their congressional representatives. Our opinions make a difference, if we are heard. Theo Dillaha

For additional information on the Farm Bill, check out the NACD website at: <http://www.nacdnet.org/govtaff/FB/taonepager.htm> or the SWCS Seeking Common Groundweb page at: http://www.swcs.org/t Seeking_intro.htm.

VA Chapter Receives Recognition

The Virginia Chapter was recognized at the meeting as the Outstanding SWCS Chapter in the Southeast Region for 2000. Congratulations to last year's officers, committee members and members for the work and dedication that earned this award.

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.bse.vt.edu/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 August 2001.

SWCS Calendar

September 18, 2001: Virginia Chapter SWCS Council Meeting

October 23-24, 2001: Annual Meeting of the Virginia Chapter, Theme: Alternative Septic Systems, best Western Red Lion Inn, Blacksburg. 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.

October 24, 2001: Virginia Chapter SWCS Council Meeting, 7:00am, Best Western Red Lion Inn, Blacksburg

May 19-20, 2002: Virginia Envirothon - University of Virginia's Bland Experimental Farm is a 700 acre field station located in the northeastern Shenandoah Valley (61 miles west of Washington, D.C. on U.S. 50, 4 miles west of Shenandoah river; or 9.5 miles east of Winchester, VA). For more information, click on the following link: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/resources/4h/environment/envirothon>

July 13-17, 2002: Soil and Water Conservation Society 2002 Annual Conference. Indianapolis, Indiana. Theme: "Setting the Pace for Conservation" For more general information, including hotel information and more about the Indianapolis area, click the following link: <http://www.hoosierchapterswcs.org/activities/settingpace.htm>



Soil and Water Conservation Society Virginia Chapter Annual Meeting October 23-24, 2001

**Best Western Red Lion Inn
Blacksburg, Virginia**

“Alternative Septic Systems”

Concerns about groundwater and surface water pollution have continued to rise over the last several years. Poorly functioning septic systems have been shown to contribute to ground and surface water problems. Come find out about the latest technology applied to residential and business waste systems.

Topics include: Design/Construction, Maintenance, Planning/Funding, Permitting, Alternative Systems, Case Studies

Speakers from federal, state, and local entities, universities, and private industry. The meeting is open to members, non-members and students.

Who should come? Local government, planners, health departments, state and federal agencies, consulting firms, watershed groups, grassroots organizations, researchers, and other individuals interested in waste management.

Program

October 23

- 8:00 – 8:50 Registration - coffee
- 9:00 – 12:00 Basics of Environmental Systems Management with emphasis on alternative septic systems and assessing wastewater options for small communities – *Lauren Linsey, National Onsite Demonstration Program trainer*
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 - 1:45 Wastewater systems for unsewered areas – *Anish Jantrania, Va. Dept. of Health*
- 1:45 – 2:30 Overview of system designs to solve wastewater treatment problems for different soil conditions – *Dr. John Simon, Simon & Assoc.*
- 2:45 – 3:30 Constructed wetlands for on-site wastewater treatment – *Betsie Ebert, Valley Engineering*
- 3:30 – 4:15 National perspective and new technology – *Clement Solomon, National Onsite Demonstration Program*
- 4:15 – 4:30 Wrap up
- 4:30 – 6:00 Exhibits
- 6:00 – 7:00 Social hour – cash bar
- 7:00 – 9:00 Awards Dinner & Installation of SWCS Officers

October 24

- 7:00 – 8:15 SWCS Executive Council Meeting
Program - Case studies
- 8:30 – 9:15 Middle Peninsula Regional On Site Repair Program – *Lewis Lawrence, Middle Peninsula PDC*
- 9:15 – 10:00 Design, construction and management of community systems – *Tony Dawood & Todd Danielson, Loudoun County Sanitation Authority*
- 10:30 – 11:15 Guest River Watershed Project – *Emmett Wampler & Toby Edwards, Wise Co. Health Dept.*
- 11:15 – 12:00 Broad Top Township Comprehensive Sewerage Management Case Study – *Bernie Hoffnar, Penn. Dept. of the Environment*
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 – 1:45 Good consulting practices to facilitate teamwork between soil scientists, surveyors, contractors, etc. for the proper installation of alternative systems – *Dr. John Simon, Simon & Assoc.*
- 1:45 – 2:30 Unusual installations of alternative systems – *Paul Small, Vassco, Inc.*
- 2:30 – 3:00 Panel discussion
- 3:00 – 3:15 Closing comments

Directions:

The Red Lion Inn is located at the intersection of Pepper's Ferry Rd and the Rt. 460 Bypass across from the west entrance of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA.

Sponsors:

National Onsite Demonstration Program
Canaan Valley Institute
Simon & Associates
New River Highlands RC&D Council

Want to let people know what you're doing?

Being a sponsor or an exhibitor is a great way to let others who attend know about your services, products or achievements. If you'd like more information on being a sponsor or an exhibitor, contact Gary Boring at (540) 228-2879. Sponsors help support the SWCS' programs like the Envirothon and technical workshops like these.

Continuing Educational Units

The Virginia Chapter of the SWCS is working with Virginia Tech to offer CEUs for the Authorized Onsite Soil Evaluator (AOSE) program for attending the workshop.

Staying over?

The Red Lion Inn in Blacksburg has reserved a block of rooms for people who plan to stay over. The cost of the rooms is between \$54 and \$58. To reserve a room, call (540) 552-7770 and mention you are with the Soil & Water Conservation Society workshop by Oct. 1, 2001.

Are you a member or the SWCS?

If not, join us. For more information, contact Virginia Kopp, membership chair at (804) 520-7229 or virginia.kopp@va.usda.gov.



**Soil and Water Conservation Society
Virginia Chapter Annual Meeting
October 23-24, 2001**

Best Western Red Lion Inn
Blacksburg, Virginia

Alternative Septic Systems Workshop Registration Form

Name _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

phone: _____ fax: _____

email: _____

Lunches, Breaks, and Awards dinner are included in workshop package.
Make checks payable to the Virginia Chapter, SWCS.

- _____ SWCS member workshop package - \$70
- _____ Non-member workshop package - \$85
- _____ Student workshop package \$50
- _____ Exhibitor package \$350, includes exhibit space and
registration fees for two people
- _____ Awards dinner ticket - \$22 (for those not attending the
workshop)
- _____ Total amount enclosed

Registration deadline: Oct. 12

Send registration form and fees to:

Kathy Harris, VA Chapter SWCS Secretary

NRCS, USDA Service Center

75 Hampton Blvd.

Christiansburg, VA 24073

Fax: (540) 381-4040