

Board of District Supervisors

Charles Davenport, Chairman
Charles Farley, Vice Chairman
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C. Leroy Smith, Member

July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

PITT SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Pitt County Agricultural Center, 403 Government Circle,
Suite 4, Greenville, NC 27834 Phone: 752-2720

Staff Members

Bryan Evans, District – Director
Don Barker, NRCS – District Conservationist
Carolyn Garris, District – Admin Assist/Ed Coord
PJ Andrews, District – Resource Conservationist II
Elizabeth Hamm, District – Resource Conservationist I

It is our mission to provide the highest quality of service to all Pitt County citizens regarding the conservation of our natural resources through technical excellence, education and teamwork.

<https://sites.google.com/site/pittswcd1963/>



District Board pictured left to right: Charles Farley, C. Leroy Smith, Thurston James, Steve Sutton, and Charles Davenport



Conservation Districts were formed during the dust bowl days and have continued to address various natural resource concerns in their communities. There are 96 soil and water conservation districts in North Carolina and are led by 496 elected and appointed North Carolina citizens known as soil and water conservation district supervisors who lead local soil and water conservation programs. The District works in conjunction with local, state, and federal agencies to provide a very comprehensive conservation program in Pitt County through technical services and environmental education.

of-the-art digital projector. The “Chia-yu Li Memorial Planetarium” will provide much easier access to astronomy, space science and the planetarium experience for students and residents of the area. When not in use as a planetarium, the geodesic dome will provide much needed additional activity space for the Center.

Conservation Highlights of 2013-2014

Landowners and users in Pitt County have benefited through technical assistance provided through our district on the following:

- Assisted Pitt County landowners and land users with drainage and erosion problems;
- Allocated over \$185,000 through cost share programs to install conservation practices on farm land in Pitt County ;
- Assisted with confined animal operations on Waste Management Systems so they can operate in an environmentally safe manner;

Those who utilize the waterways of this state have also benefited through water quality improvement provided by installed best management practices such as conservation tillage, long term no-till, field borders, filter strips, grassed waterways, nutrient and pest management, riparian buffers, and cropland conversion. The installation of these practices led to the reduction of nutrients and erosion throughout Pitt County aiding in water quality improvement. There was a total reduction of 1,630 pounds of nitrogen, 246 pounds of phosphorus, and 1,128 tons of soil due to the conservation practices established during the year.

Legumes Cover Crop Grant

The Pitt Soil and Water Conservation District received a grant through the North Carolina Foundation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Inc., which was funded through Cotton Inc., to demonstrate the benefits of legumes for soil health. Cover crops are important for protecting the soil during fallowed periods from eroding as well as a great source for increasing organic matter. Many farmers in Pitt County use cover crops, but most are single species winter annuals. This grant allowed the District to include multiple species including legumes. A variety of Rye, Triticale, Clover, Winter Pea and Radish were used for different benefits. The Rye and Triticale provided great biomass, the Clover and Winter Pea legumes provided nitrogen fixation and the radish provided deep soil penetration for maintenance of compaction and hardpan. Two workshops were held for producers to demonstrate the processes and benefits. The Soil and Water District has received an extension of the grant to see the effects of continued use of this type cover crop system.



Voluntary Agricultural Districts



The Pitt County Agricultural Advisory Board has accepted 6 Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VADs) totaling over 1000 acres. VADs bring awareness to the agricultural community and heritage of Pitt County as well as bringing education to those residents who are unfamiliar with agricultural activities. Pitt County's 171,000 acres of farmland produced over \$174,000,000 in cash receipts in 2012, contributing greatly to North Carolina's number one industry. VADs confirm farm owners' commitment to maintaining agricultural lands through a 10 year conservation agreement.

New Best Management Practice Introduced

Windbreaks are a practice that is not new, but new applications for these age old wind diverters are. Two to three linear rows of trees dividing fields of older windbreaks can still be found in our County, but for some time these best management practices (BMPs) have not been included as a cost shareable water quality practice. The Pitt District received approval from the North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Commission to include these BMPs as a tool to reduce transport of windborne soil particles. As a side benefit, wildlife corridors are created as well as natural screens for habitat improvement.



A new type and use for these wind current diverters has also been approved for cost share. The use of native warm season grasses, shrubs or trees can be used on participating animal operations to divert wind currents near exhaust fans. This could potentially reduce odor issues as well as trap some gasses associated with exhaust fans on these operations. Additional benefits are screening and drift reducers.

NC Ag Cost Share Program

The 2012-2013 Cost Share fiscal year was busy as in the past. Several Best Management Practices (BMPs) were surveyed, designed, and installed to reduce soil and nutrient loss. Sediment is the leading cause of impairment in our rivers and streams. Losing this precious resource greatly reduces soil productivity. Though we are relatively flat in Pitt County, our large tracts of farmland still create areas that could have severe erosion issues. Funds are available through the North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program to repair BMPs damaged by unusual storm events. If you are interested in resolving natural resource issues on your farm, please contact our office.

USDA Programs

There are many federal programs which could be utilized on your farm. Each of these programs has specific conservation objectives which must be impacted. The programs are specific as to what must be done and are designed to fit everyone's situation. Most of the programs tie to water quality improvements, enhancement of wildlife habitat, or the conservation of our soil and water resources. There are many other federal programs available. To check them out, visit the following website: <http://www.nc.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>. Each program has its own set of rules and requirements. Feel free to contact this office for additional information on the available programs.

A Great Partner in Environmental Education

When the Pitt Soil and Water Conservation District started a small education center in 2003 on properties acquired through the FEMA Flood Mitigation program, we had no idea that a partnership as strong as the one we have would have developed. Dr. John and Mrs. Nancy Bray of Bray Hollow LLC quickly joined our education efforts and started development of A Time for Science Nature and Science Center on properties they purchased on all sides

of the Center. Through their efforts, citizens of Pitt and surrounding counties have the opportunity to experience nature first hand. Focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education, many components have been added and countless individuals and groups are reaping the benefits. Most recently, A Time for Science held the groundbreaking for the Chia-yu Li Memorial Planetarium. This geodesic dome will house an inflatable projection dome and a state-

2014 Coastal Envirothon Competition

The Envirothon program is a competitive event for five member high school and middle school teams to compete in a natural resources knowledge and ecology field day against other high school and middle school teams. It stimulates, rein-forces, and enhances students' interest in the environment and our state's natural resources. Teams from DH Conley HS, The Oakwood School, South Central HS, JH Rose HS, Greenville Montessori MS, and CM Eppes MS competed at the 2014 Coastal Envirothon. Five teams qualified to compete at the NC State Envirothon held in Burlington, N.C. in April. If your school is interested in competing at the Coastal Envirothon, please contact our office. You can also visit <http://www.nccoastalenvirothon.org/home>, for more information.

