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Pitt Soil & Water Newsletter

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Conservation District Board

- Charles Davenport, Chairman
- Charles Farley, Vice Chairman
- Steve Sutton, Secretary/Treasurer
- Thurston James, Member
- Zeke Jackson, Member

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The Importance of Cover Crop during the Fallow Season

Pitt County has relatively flat to gently sloping fields which do not appear to have a significant erosion problem. However, the long slopes compounded by sandy topsoil, can deliver tons of sediment into our ditches and streams. Nutrients attached to these eroded soil particles contribute to the degradation of water quality by promoting growth of aquatic weeds. Late winter and early spring winds blow soil particles around causing blinding dust storms and filling of ditches, creating drainage problems in addition to water quality issues.

Many of our crops, such as corn and wheat return a great amount of cover in

the form of residue. This residue anchors the soil and reduces the velocity of water running off the fields, protecting our topsoil and improving water quality. Leaving these residues on the land until the next growing season has many benefits, including increased soil quality.

Other low residue producing crops, such as peanuts and tobacco, leave little to hold the soil in place. Planting cover crops like small grain provide the needed protection while as utilizing residual herbicides and fertilizers.

There are options within the NC Agricultural Cost Share Program to assist with leaving residue or planting cover crops. Please

contact our office if you would like more information on protecting your soil and the quality of our most precious natural resource.

~ Bryan Evans, Director



Wind Erosion



Residue Management

Conservation Planning

As with any business, good planning goes a long way. For years, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and USDA/NRCS have offered planning for farmers and farm owners. Conservation plans evaluate the resources while providing solutions and suggestions to improve water quality, soil quality, manage wildlife, protect natural resources and seek financial assistance for installing Best Management Practices.

A Time for Science

The Pitt County Environmental Education Center has joined forces with an elite group of volunteers to provide outstanding environmental education opportunities to citizens in our County. A Time for Science is a nature and science learning center that applies application to knowledge. Coordination with Bray Hollow, LLC and the Pitt County Education Center, provides a great outdoor classroom with a great biodiversity. Visit the website to learn more about the area and opportunities at www.atimeforscience.org.

NRCS / EQIP

With the passage of a new Farm Bill comes change to USDA programs. One program which has been changed is EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program). Program priorities have changed to include pools of dollars for the highly underserved and organic producers. There are also funding pools for cropland, animal operations and forestry. The practices for which financial assistance is available have proven benefits to our environment. There is not a deadline for making application. Once application is made, it will be ranked against the other applications received. The applications providing the most environmental benefits are chosen for funding. Making application does not guarantee the funding of your application, but if you do not make application you will definitely not receive any financial assistance. EQIP puts a high priority on funding practices to improve water and air quality from animal agriculture. Sixty (60) percent of the appropriated funds each year must be spent on animal agriculture.

We can look at your problem and advise if financial and technical assistance are a possibility. For more information on program requirements or included conservation practices, contact Tim Etheridge at 252-752-2720.

Environmental Education

***“We don’t
inherit the earth
from our
ancestors, we
borrow it from
our children.”
~ Native
American
Proverb***

The Pitt Soil and Water District office hosted a Food, Land and People (FLP) workshop on October 2, 2009. FLP provides curriculum based activities and lessons to formal and informal educators to promote sustainability. Focused on agriculture, FLP correlates the need of food and fiber production and the use and protection of our natural resources. Pictured, participants learned the benefits and regulations associated with aerial agricultural spraying. Mike Clark, owner of Mikes Flying Service, explains the process and showed attendees the components of a crop duster.



**In-Line Tile Box
Water Control
Structure**

North Carolina Cost Share Programs

The N.C. Agriculture Cost Share Program was put into place to assist farmers with installing Best Management Practices to address water quality issues on their farm. This year the Pitt Soil & Water District was allocated \$85,066 to address these concerns. Each application is prioritized to distribute the money according to environmental benefits.

The N.C. Community Conservation Assistance Program addresses water quality concerns found in urbanized areas. Storm water has become a dominant issue in our growing society, and the CCAP BMP's can help alleviate this stress. The District has \$3,053 remaining in this program to fund applications.

If you are interested in either of these state programs and their requirements please contact our office for more information or to fill out an application. Also, visit our website to see a full list of the Best Management Practices offered through both of these programs.

~Donnarie Hales, Cost Share Technician

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