

**PITT COUNTY
AGRICULTURE
CENTER**
403 GOVERNMENT
CIRCLE, SUITE 4
GREENVILLE, NC
252-752-2720 X 3
www.pittswcd.us

Pitt Soil & Water Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

Summer 2010

Conservation District Board

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

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Water Control Structures

Water control structures are a great water quality practice, but only if managed properly. These structures increase denitrification in the soil profile and reduce harmful greenhouse forms of nitrogen. They also decrease sediment and nutrient delivery downstream. Management requires installing boards at different levels during different times of the growing season. Another valuable benefit is retaining water for production during dry times. Additional water during critical growing stages of crops has a considerable benefit to yield. NC State University has developed an online drainage advisory to assist in properly controlling the management level of water.

Pitt County receives nitrogen reduction credits for the Neuse and Tar River basins for these structures, however, the credits will not be there if they are not managed. For additional information about water control structures or proper management, contact our office.

~Bryan Evans



Basin Report

For the crop year 2009, Pitt County had approximately 150,000 acres farmed which is down from last year by 2,000 acres. Nitrogen reduction numbers have stayed steady in the county with the Tar-Pam having a 52% reduction and the Neuse with a 41% reduction thus keeping us well above the 30% goal. We can contribute these great reduction numbers in 2008 to all the farmers in the county willing to install BMP practices and the hard work of the soil and water conservation staff to help reduce runoff and maintain water quality in our creeks and streams.

~ P.J. Andrews

Nutrient Management Updates

This fall and winter has been a very difficult time for animal producers in Pitt County because of excess rainfall. It has been hard to maintain lagoon levels with all the rainfall. The rainfall has been between 30 and 40 inches of rain since last November 2009. The cold weather has also made it hard to maintain cover crop and over seed for the spray fields. Some producers are required to have a 30 day Plan of Action to inform DWQ of high lagoon levels. Hopefully the warmer weather will help solve some of the problems. If you have any questions concerning your waste plan, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

~Gene Anderson

And the winners are...



Front row students
left to right...
Wilmisha May, Jonathan Stead, and
Aaron Vick.

Congratulations!!!

2010 Contest Theme: The Living Soil

Amos Stead of Stead Academy took 1st place in the 6th grade poster contest. Amos also took 1st place during the essay contest in Pitt County and 1st place in Regional. His essay has been forwarded to Raleigh to compete in the State contest during the month of May. Wilmisha May of CM Eppes Middle took 1st place during the 7th grade public speaking contest. Aaron Vick of Stead Academy came in 2nd. Jonathan Stead of Stead Academy walked away with 1st place in the 8th grade public speaking contest. Wilmisha and Jonathan both competed in Raleigh at the State public speaking contest against 7 other regions and received honorable mention along with plaques. Great job everyone!

USDA PROGRAMS

We get telephone calls or visits each day asking if we have a program that can help with a specific need. Most of the time, the answer is maybe. There are many financial assistance programs and each normally has a specific purpose. There must be an existing problem (resource concern) for most programs to provide financial assistance. If you have a resource problem and need help with solving it, give us a call. We will check out your problem and make recommendations on how to improve or correct your problem. If more than one solution is available, we will provide alternative means of solving the problem. We will also try to guide you in making application to available programs which might provide financial assistance. Your specific need may or may not be part of a federal or state program. Most of the financial assistance programs have a system of ranking each application against each other and funding the highest ranking applications. Financial assistance to implement conservation solutions are not a sure thing. Please give us a call to check out your resource problem and we will do our best to find a federal or state program which assists in the solution!

~ Tim Etheridge

Summer: A Season for Drainage Management

The last couple of years Pitt County has been severely affected by a drought that made water management a crucial part of farming. As this winter has taught us, too much water can be just as bad, if not worse, than not having enough. Despite the amount of rainfall, drainage management plays a very important role in crop production, water conservation, and water quality. Managing tile systems and open ditches gives operators the ability to adjust the water table in their fields. On most of our flat landscapes, manipulating the water table will allow you to bring the water table to a level that is necessary to positively influence the crops root system. In-line tile water control structures and traditional ditch water control structures, when being managed properly, will aid farmers in maintaining a healthy crop during temperamental rainfall seasons. Remember, this season you could be a riser board away from increasing your crop yield! If you would like to know more about water control structure management, please contact our office staff.

~ Donnarie Hales

Office Staff

Bryan Evans- Director
Gene Anderson-RCS II

Tim Etheridge-District Conservationist
Donnarie Hales- RCS I

Carolyn Garris-Admin/Env. Education
P.J. Andrews- RCS I

2010 Envirothon Training Day

Students and Advisors toughed it out during the first training day at the Pitt County Environmental Education Center at Bray Hollow!



Wildlife-Melissa Meyers, Weyerhaeuser's Cool Springs Environmental Education Center



Current Environmental Issues
Nancy Bray, Bray Hollow, LLC



Aquatic Ecology, Marlene Salyer, NC DENR & Carolyn Garris, Pitt SWCD



Forestry-Jim Hines, Weyerhaeuser's Cool Springs Environmental Education Center



Soils/Land Use-Kent Keeter, Pitt County Environmental Health



Students from A. G. Cox Middle, Stead Academy, Montessori School of Greenville, D. H. Conley HS, and Oakwood School gathered at the Pitt County Environmental Education Center to listen and learn from presenters during the Envirothon Training Day on February 26. Students were able to use Biltmore sticks at the forestry station, characteristics of soils, wildlife profiles, aquatic habitats, and pressing current environmental issues. After lunch, teams gathered together for testing at each station. Pitt County teams competed with other counties at the Coastal Envirothon on March 23, 2010 at Weyerhaeuser's Cool Springs Environmental Education! Winners competed at the State Envirothon at Burlington Cedar Rock Park April 23-24. **Way to go everyone!**
~Carolyn Garris

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Community Conservation In Pitt County



Storm Water Wetland

Pitt County Soil and Water is continually reaching out to the public to aid in drainage issues throughout the county. The North Carolina Community Conservation Assistance Program gives the District an opportunity to allocate funds to install Best Management Practices to alleviate the pressure from storm water in urban settings.

J.H. Rose High School is in the process of installing a storm water wetland on the property that will provide a water quality benefit along with an educational opportunity. The wetland will capture storm water runoff from approximately eighty acres from the surrounding area and will provide treatment for the water before it outlets into Greens Mill Run. This project is also offering a hands on learning experience for the science classes at J.H. Rose. Various classes will be taking part

in the plantings of the wetland plants and lessons on water quality will be incorporated from their curriculum in this outdoor setting. This project will be complete in June of this year.

The Pitt County District Park has taken steps in reducing water quality issues on their site by installing pet waste receptacles through the Community Conservation Program. The growing number of citizens, and their dogs, utilizing the park has created the need for pet waste receptacles. The use of these receptacles reduces the amount of bacteria, such as Fecal Coli form, from entering our local waterways. This simple practice also keeps our parks and public places clean and safe for recreational activities.

If you would like more information on the N.C. Community Conservation Assistance Program and the Best Management Practices that it covers, please contact our office.

~ Donnarie Hales



Pet Waste Receptacle

A Time for Science: Summer Camps

A Time for Science is kicking off the summer with great new education opportunities. Starting small, *A Time for Science* will be offering two summer science camps for middle grades, grades 6 to 8, youth this summer. They will be taking 12 participants on a first-come-first-serve basis, so do not hesitate to register and reserve your spot today.

“Biodiversity—My Favorite Place” is a one-week, full-day camp for middle-school students combining the fun of observing nature in its vast diversity with the fun of digital photography. After an orientation on what to look for and after choosing his/her “Favorite Place” among the many habitats on the Bray Hollow Nature Conservancy, the participant will visit that location every morning to look for, identify, describe, and record – through digital photography and/or other artistic media – the varied plant and animal life they encounter at their “Favorite Place.” The dates for this class is July 12-16.

“Get a Jump on Science Fair” is a two-part, morning-session summer science camp for middle grades students to fully engage them in the “Doing of Science.” To maximize the benefit of this camp it is anticipated that the student will: a.) continue his/her work after each morning session in order to complete the tasks required for the following session, b.) work through the summer on the selected project, and c.) complete the last three morning sessions of the camp near the end of the summer vacation. The dates for this class is June 21-25 and also August 9-11.

For cost and registration information visit : www.atimeforscience.org

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