

Monacan Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Report for FY 2022-23

Monacan Soil and Water Conservation District encompasses Powhatan and Goochland County. Monacan SWCD assists landowners, land managers, and citizens in conserving our soil and water resources. The District appreciates the financial support from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Goochland county, Powhatan County, and other sources to conduct local conservation efforts.

Agriculture

Monacan administers the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program (VACS) at the local soil and water conservation district level. Through VACS, Monacan provides technical and financial assistance to local agricultural producers and landowners for implementing agricultural best management practices, BMPs. Funding for the VACS program is provided from the General Assembly through the Department of Conservation of Recreation (DCR), Division of Soil and Water Conservation (DSWC). For program year 2023, Monacan SWCD provided the following assistance.



- 384 practices with 28 farming operations were approved for \$1,023,832.
- 49 contracts including 333 practices were completed resulting in \$1,022,315 of financial assistance paid to agricultural producers and landowners.
- 5 Year Contract Renewals
 - 624 acres of Continuous No-tillage planting on cropland
 - 2 Animal Waste Storage Structures
 - 8 Animal Waste Composting Facilities
 - 7 Livestock Stream Exclusion Practices with alternative watering systems
 - 52,973 linear feet of stream bank exclusion
 - 210 acres of stream buffers
 - 553 acres of land management
- New Conservation Practices
 - 6,478 acres of Nutrient Management Planning
 - 9 acres of cropland converted to long-term grassland.
 - 7,884 acres of cover crops
 - 2,591 acres of precision nutrient management

- 5 Livestock Stream Exclusion Practices with alternative watering systems
 - 13,444 linear feet of stream bank exclusion
 - 23 acres of stream buffers
 - 200 acres of improved land management
- Current Long-term Contract Management (5–15-year contract lifespans)
 - 91 contracts
 - 63 farming operations
 - \$2.6 million dollars of contracts
 - 7,228 acres under management
 - 1,136 acres of stream buffers
 - 78 miles (414,183 feet) of stream bank protection

These conservation practices reflect efforts of agricultural operations in Goochland and Powhatan to achieve nutrient and sediment reduction goals of the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load plan.

As a DCR grant deliverable, Monacan hosted a conservation outreach program with Virginia State University’s (VSU) Small Farm Outreach Program (SFOP). The program provided agricultural landowners with information from VSU SFOP, Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Farm Service Agency (FSA), James River Association (JRA), Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF), and Capital Region Land Conservancy.

Monacan participates in the Resource Management Plan Program (RMP) and Agricultural Stewardship Act (ASA) Program. Staff annually assist Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) with private pesticide applicators recertifications and the Well Water Testing program.

On-site visits were made for agricultural land clearing and conservation assistance to landowners. Site visits and technical assistance ranged from new farm visits to lifetime producers requesting technical services.

Monacan staff worked with conservation partners such as the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Agricultural Stewardship Act), Virginia Cooperative Extension, USDA Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service, local government, Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD), and other soil and water districts. Additional partners include the Department of Conservation and Recreation, James River Association, Farm Credit, Farm Bureau, and Middle James Roundtable.

Being housed in the Goochland Agricultural Center, Monacan was able to host several statewide meetings and events. Over the past year, Monacan provided a VACS informational session to VSU SFOP staff. DCR DSWC engineering staff used the location for engineering training, multiple other DSWC meetings were held in our conference rooms, along with other agricultural groups for local and regional meetings.

Monacan SWCD has been actively working with a partnership of conservation organizations and the Department of Corrections at James River Correctional Center in Goochland and Powhatan. The conservation partnership received the inaugural Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan Collaboration Excellence Award.



The Capital Region Land Conservancy (CRLC) and Monacan SWCD signed an agreement for partnering with conservation easement holdings within Monacan's boundaries. As a partner, Monacan provided technical support for land being placed under conservation easement with the CRLC.

Education

Monacan granted a scholarship to a high school student to attend VASWCD's Youth Conservation Camp. We were proud to have Patrick (pictured) represent Monacan at Youth Conservation Camp. Programs and demonstrations were provided to over 450 students and members of the community. Betty McCracken, our Conservation Specialist II, provided watershed and soil lessons to multiple elementary age kids. Keith Burgess, our District Manager, provided presentations to the Goochland Leadership Enterprise and Powhatan Leadership Institute.



Monacan staff assisted Colonial SWCD with planning and delivery of the Area III Envirothon competition in Charles City County.

Monacan participated with VCE staff in the Beef Cattle 360 Program, Equine Pasture Walk programs, and Well Water Testing Program. Conservation information is provided to the community on the Monacan SWCD Facebook and web page. We also maintain displays in the Goochland Agricultural Center.

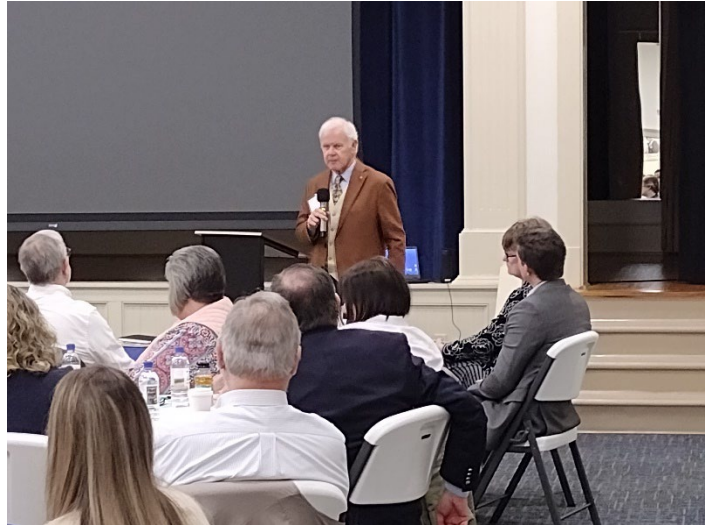
Urban/Local Government

Monacan continues to work cooperatively with both Goochland and Powhatan County local governments. Staff are working with both counties to provide technical assistance and develop more resources for agricultural land clearing activities. County staffs routinely request assistance for agricultural land management matters.

Administration

District staff and Directors attended training offered through VASWCD (Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts) and DCR. Staff attended the training at Grave's Mountain last August. Staff and Directors attended the annual meeting in December at the Roanoke Hotel. These events covered diverse topics, such as Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Personnel Management, and Benefits Administration. Keith Burgess and Lissy Hamilton attended Human Resources training provided by VASWCD in the spring.

Monacan hosted the Area III meeting, which included speakers from VSU's SFOP, the James River Association, Joe Guthrie, the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Delegate Lee Ware (pictured).



Staff continues to maintain certifications for: Nutrient Management Planning, Conservation Planning, engineering job approval authorities, pesticide applicator certifications, WEI (Watershed Education Institute) Watershed Facilitator, Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) and Chesapeake Bay. Landscape Professional. Staff also serve on VACS technical committees.

Monacan District Director Richard Ayers (center) was recognized by Jonathan Lyle and Bill Cox, Powhatan Board of Supervisor member, as Richard retired from his position as Director-at-Large at the end of his term in December of 2022. Sebastian Volcker, previous associate director, was appointed by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board to fill the Director-at-Large position. Dan Jones, Powhatan community member and CRLC board member, was appointed to be an associate director.



Soil and Water Resources Conservation

Monacan District has adopted the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP). Staff provided residential site visits and are working with clients to improve residential conservation practices.

The District continues to participate in the TMDL programs as set forth by DCR and the localities. Betty currently serves on the Middle James Roundtable Steering. Keith serves on the James River Riparian Consortium Steering Committee and the James River

Buffer Program. The James River Buffer program provides technical and financial assistance to landowners for restoring stream buffers on agricultural and non-agricultural land.

Monacan Soil & Water Conservation District Directors and Associate Directors

<u>Directors</u>	<u>Associate Directors</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Jonathan Lyle, Chair	Rachel Henley	Keith Burgess, District Manager
Ronnie Nuckols	Dan Jones	Betty McCracken, Conservation Specialist II
John Kochensparger	Ken Carter	Lissy Hamilton, Office Administrator
Kenton Moyer		Colton Sullivan, Agricultural Conservationist
Nicole Shuman		
Sebastian Volcker		

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports of the Monacan Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board.

We work with the people who work the land.

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