



From the Fall Line

Summer 2019

Serving the Counties of King George, Spotsylvania, Stafford & the City of Fredericksburg



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A HOOK FULL OF PLARN



Aysnleigh Escher, of Colonial Forge High School, holding up the finished sewn plastic bag.

April is a month of Earth Day celebrations. Though the observance day is on April 22, many local groups and agencies provide additional Earth Day events throughout the month to spread the importance of conservation stewardship. This year, Tri-County/City was excited to participate in four Earth Day events throughout the District. From Fort AP Hill to the University of Mary Washington, our staff engaged with over 1,000 people across the District for Earth Day.

CONTACT US

4811 Carr Drive • Fredericksburg,
Virginia 22408

(540) 656-2401 or (540) 656-2402

Fax: (540) 656-2403 • tccswcd.org



In honor of Earth Day, Tri-County/City and the students at Colonial Forge High School (CFHS) together with the Rappahannock Regional Solid Waste Management Board (R-Board) devised a plan to make a statement. While working with the R-Board on ideas to turn trash into art for Stafford County Public Schools' annual Fine Arts Festival, the students had an idea. **Could you knit a new bag out of plastic bags?**



A loom was used to knit the plarn into square tiles.

Eventually, TCC Education Coordinator Mariya Hudick figured out a system to convert plastic shopping bags into yarn. Or, as the students called it, “plarn”, or plastic yarn.

Plarn is durable and malleable enough to knit together into individual square tiles. Before any knitting or sewing could happen students first had to make the plarn, which proved to be the most time-consuming part of the process. The R-Board, Tri-County/City, Fredericksburg Parks & Recreation, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services collected plastic bags for the students, who met after

school to create balls of plarn. Cutting the bags into strips, tying the strips together, and snipping off weak and excess plastic took students over 10 hours to complete.

The next step is to hand-sew the pieces together to form the bag. Easier said than done, but CFHS students were ready to take on the challenge.

With nearly 80 plastic bags converted to plarn, another 20 hours was needed to knit the bag. On occasion onlookers asked, **“Is this even worth it?”** Was the result worth all the effort?

The CFHS students let action speak louder than words. The total amount of waste produced by the whole project equated to a clump of plastic scraps less than the size of a golf ball. For CFHS students, this inventive way to curb plastic pollution and make art at the same time, was worth it.



CFHS National Art Honor Society students preparing the balls of plarn.

The final product was showcased at the Stafford County Public Schools' Fine Arts Festival. It was then donated as a raffle prize at the Fredericksburg Earth Day Festival on April 27.

NEW COMMUNITY GARDENS IN KING GEORGE SHOWCASE NATIVE PLANTS

On June 8, the Plant Central Rappahannock Natives Campaign will dedicate a series of native plant demonstration gardens at Cedell Brooks, Jr. Park in King George County. Five gardens, including over 70 species and 650 plants, showcase the color, variety, and multiple benefits of plants native to this region.

Visitors will find a meadow garden, pollinator garden, rain garden, and gardens demonstrating native plants suitable for difficult-to-landscape areas like hillsides and streetsides. The educational experience of the gardens is enhanced by interpretive signs and plant ID markers, which include a description and engraved drawing of the plant as well as a QR code linked to the regional plant guide, "Native Plants for Central Rappahannock Virginia." The campaign is also planning to produce a brochure to encourage local organizations and schools to use the gardens as an outdoor classroom and community resource.

The Plant Central Rappahannock Natives Campaign promotes the use of plants that are native to the City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford and is part of a larger effort by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program to increase the demand and supply of Virginia native plants through public-private collaboration.

"Collaboration was key to the installation of the gardens at Cedell Brooks, Jr. Park," shares Kate Gibson, Deputy Director with the George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC). "It has been such a pleasure to work with the various partners that have come together for the campaign and to make the demonstration gardens a reality."

Artwood Gardens, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Rappahannock Valley Garden Club, King George County, and others have so far contributed 577 volunteer and staff hours, valued at \$13,871, to install and maintain the gardens. This helps to match a \$24,716 grant from the Virginia CZM Program for the gardens.



Grow, little seedlings, grow!



Volunteers working hard to see this project come to fruition.

"The county envisioned the park as an educational, discovery, and demonstration facility where visitors can learn about the flora and fauna of our region, and the conservation practices that can be applied at home," explains Chris Clarke, Director of the King George Parks and Recreation Department. "We're excited that these new native plant gardens help us fulfill that mission."

The dedication ceremony will be held on June 8, 2019 at 1 PM at Cedell Brooks, Jr. Park, 11259 Henry Griffin Road, King George, VA 22485. There will be a brief ceremony, followed by guided tours of the gardens. This event is free and open to the public.

More information on the Plant Central Rappahannock Natives Campaign, as well as a free digital copy of the plant guide are available at

<https://www.plantvirginiannatives.org/plant-central-rappahannock-natives>.

2019 ANNUAL COST-SHARE PROGRAM SIGN-UP

One of the directives of the Tri-County/City Soil & Water Conservation District is to take applications for and distribute **Virginia's Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) Cost-Share Program** funding. The purpose of the supported BMPs is to protect and improve water quality in the three watersheds within the District: the Potomac, the Rappahannock, and the York. Examples of eligible BMPs are planting cover crops to reduce erosion and retain nutrients in fields that traditionally have laid barren over the winter; establishing and planting vegetative buffers; fencing livestock out rivers, ponds, and streams; and development and implementation of a nutrient management plan written by a certified Nutrient Management Plan Writer.



A cover crop at the end of its season.

Initial Cost-Share Program sign-up will be from July 1, 2019 - August 9, 2019.

This means that you must fill out an application for inclusion in the program during this time frame. Applications will be accepted, ranked, and approved at the District's monthly Board of Directors meeting in September.

Who is eligible for "cost-share" monies?

Anyone who has a bona fide program of agricultural management and is engaged in the production of agricultural, horticultural, or forest products for market is eligible. The real estate must consist of a minimum of five contiguous acres and have verifiable gross receipts in

excess of \$1,000 per year from the sale of the agricultural, horticultural, or forest products produced on that land for each of the past five years.

We will have our base program, which includes practices such as planting a Small Grain Cover Crop; Converting Cropland to Hayland; Split Application of Nitrogen on Corn; Livestock Watering System (well, fencing, pipeline, trough); Nutrient Management Plan Writing; as well as many other BMPs.

If you apply and are approved for funding, you must develop a Nutrient Management Plan to receive the approved funding.

You may also receive a state tax credit for 25% of your out-of-pocket expenses to install some BMPs. A tax credit may also be given to purchase a piece of machinery to more precisely apply your fertilizer.

Please call Etta Lucas, Conservation Specialist, at (540) 656 - 2402 or visit the District office at 4811 Carr Drive, Fredericksburg, VA to make an application or discuss the BMP Cost—Share Program requirements.

NRCS CORNER



WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

Come by the office and meet our new employee, Ben Hamm! Ben comes to us with education in environmental and natural resources and extensive experience in soils and environmental project planning with the United States Department of Interior, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Department of Agriculture. He is a certified Master Naturalist and volunteers with the National Park Service as well. Ben will normally be working in the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) office on Tuesdays and Thursdays and will also be assisting Tri-County/City with various educational events. We're very happy to have him join our team and hope you will come by and introduce yourselves when you have the opportunity!

PASTURE GRAZING MANAGEMENT

It's finally that time of year again - where you can hear the grass grow, especially with the unusual amount of rain we have had lately! With Spring green-up comes opportunity, and with opportunity comes the chance for success! Here in Virginia, we are blessed with many productive soils, a good amount of annual precipitation, and a decent growing season that all work in our favor for a chance at a healthy and productive grassland system. As with any system in agriculture, the ability of the system to perform at its best is dependent upon the level of management being put into it.

NRCS offers opportunities for producers to learn about better pasture management and intensive grazing systems that will not only benefit their land and herds but their bottom-dollar through lower input costs, all while also providing opportunities for financial assistance in establishing the needed infrastructure that helps create those systems. Educational opportunities are provided through various grazing management schools, pasture walks, and field days. If you or someone you know are interested in learning about the many opportunities NRCS has to offer for better pasture and grazing management, come see us here at the office!

Remember,

If you got grass, you got options!

Matt Roberts

Soil Conservationist, USDA-NRCS

2019 ENVIROTHON SEASON



Envirothon Team brainstorming while enjoying the UMW campus.

As college students emptied the halls of the University of Mary Washington (UMW) for their Summer break, Envirothon Teams across the state filled the campus with their competitive spirit and a thirst to prove their knowledge of conservation.

Envirothon is an opportunity for students to apply their academic knowledge to solve real-world problems with creativity and ingenuity. Seventeen teams contended this year to demonstrate their potential as future conservationists. Among them, our very own King George 4-H Team competed for their earned spot this season. Lead by their coach, VA Cooperative Extension Agent Terry Misch, the students gave a striking performance to show off their skills. On April 10, the team placed second at the Area III Competition which prompted them to proceed onto the State level.



King George 4-H Team tackling the Soils Exam!

Virginia's Dominion Envirothon State Competition was hosted at UMW on May 19 and 20. Students from across the state lodged in campus dorms as they raced to prepare their research, cue cards, and proposals for the special topic presentations. This year's Envirothon theme was **"Agriculture & the Environment: Knowledge and Technology to Feed the World"**. Teams were tasked to create a proposal for a hypothetical farmer in Essex County that wished to improve their overall soil health and water quality, increase wildlife habitats and forest health, and reduce labor inputs on the site. After months of extensive research, calculated analysis, and hours of effective communication practice, the teams presented their findings as crop consulting companies to a panel of professionals in the conservation field. They expected constructive criticism, suggestions for improvements, and overall feedback. What they did not foresee was that one of the judges was the hypothetical farmer from Essex County. And the eyes opened wide.



Louisa County High School conducting their Oral Presentation.

The season ended with Jamestown High School placing first overall with Louisa County High School and Fort Defiance following closely behind. Dr. Melanie Szulczewski, a UMW Assistant Professor, closed the second day of competition with her inspiring remarks on the opportunities in the environmental sciences. Jamestown High School will represent Virginia at Nationals this upcoming July in North Carolina.

Interested in Envirothon? Contact Mariya Hudick, Education Coordinator, at mariya.hudick@tccswcd.org or (540) 656-2401

TRI-COUNTY/CITY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS at Salem Church Branch Library

Join Tri-County/City Soil & Water Conservation District once a month at the **Salem Church Branch Library** for interactive and hands-on learning as we discover concepts in soil and water to better understand our environment.

These **FREE** educational programs are offered to the public and open to **all ages**.
Pre-registration is preferable but not required. Contact **Mariya Hudick** for more information.

Email mariya.hudick@tccswcd.org or call
(540) 656-2401.



Programs are offered on

Mondays from

2 PM - 3 PM at

Salem Church Branch Library

(2607 Salem Church Road,
Fredericksburg, VA 22407).

January 28 (It's All Downstream)

February 25 (Animal Apartments)

March 25 (Soil Supreme)

April 29 (Your Water Footprint)

May 20 (4x4 Vision)

June 24 (The Incredible Journey)

July 22 (Sketching Nature)

August 26 (The Living Colors)

September 23 (The Pollution Solution)

October 28 (A Day in the Life of a Pebble)

November 18 (Our Slithering Friends—
Rivers!)

December 16 (Lettuce in a Jar?
It's Hydroponics!)

STUDENTS SPLASH INTO SCIENCE



Lake Anna, the perfect spot to learn about water conservation.

Middle School. A time of exploration as students take a glimpse into life through block-scheduling, increased responsibility, and interactive peer collaborations. Sounds fun, right? It is during this time that they are also taking the first steps to create life-long interests and forge their unique academic identities.

Tri-County/City staff has had a satisfying Spring connecting with students at this unique juncture in life. Tri-County/City and agency partners were able to visit almost all Spotsylvania 6th grade classrooms this year to present engaging conservation lessons. The teachers of Post Oak Middle School (POMS) were ready to take the next step. Lead by 6th Grade Science teacher Ms. Kristen Kuhn, the school collaborated with Ranger Lauri Schular of Lake Anna State Park (LASP), Nancy Stalik of Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR), Mariya Hudick of Tri-County/City, and Master Naturalist volunteers to organize a field day at LASP. On March 22, 200 students rotated through various stations diving deeper into water conservation. While the incredible gusts of wind were blowing away our supplies, the students were, too, blown away to realize their individual impact on

the watershed. From water quality monitoring to groundwater pollution, POMS students expanded their awareness and reached a better understanding of the intricate workings of their York Watershed.

POMS students were not the only ones discovering the wonders of their waterways. In April, King George Elementary School 6th graders visited Aspen Grove Farm for their annual field day, organized by Tri-County/City and hosted by farmer and Tri-County/City Director Janet Gayle Harris. Over 100 students rotated through stations that covered macroinvertebrates, chemical water testing, physical stream analysis, and a wetlands scavenger hunt. Volunteers and partner agency staff from LASP, Virginia Department of Forestry, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services, and local Master Naturalists came together with Tri-County/City once again to continue their joint efforts to educate our youth on water conservation.

Interested in volunteering with Tri-County/City to inspire a student or even a whole class? Contact Mariya Hudick, Education Coordinator, at mariya.hudick@tccswcd.org or (540) 656-2401



King George Elementary School student using their scavenger hunt key chart to spot clues of a wetland environment.

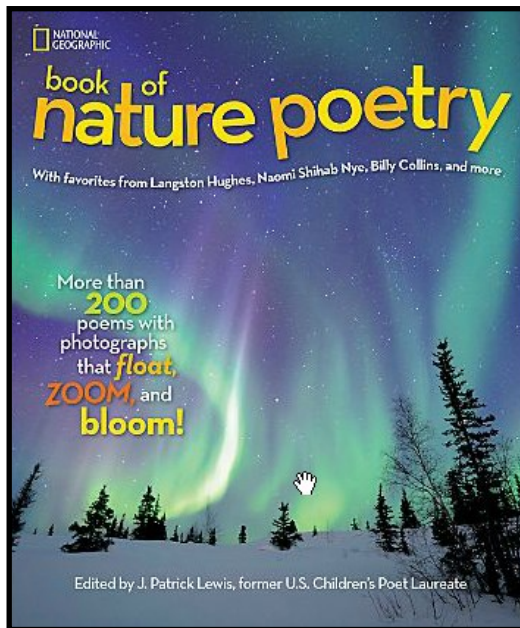


THE READING NOOK

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Have a suggestion you would like to see in the next issue? Contact **Mariya Hudick** at (540) 656-2402 or email mariya.hudick@tccswcd.org

PSST! I'm available
at your local
library!

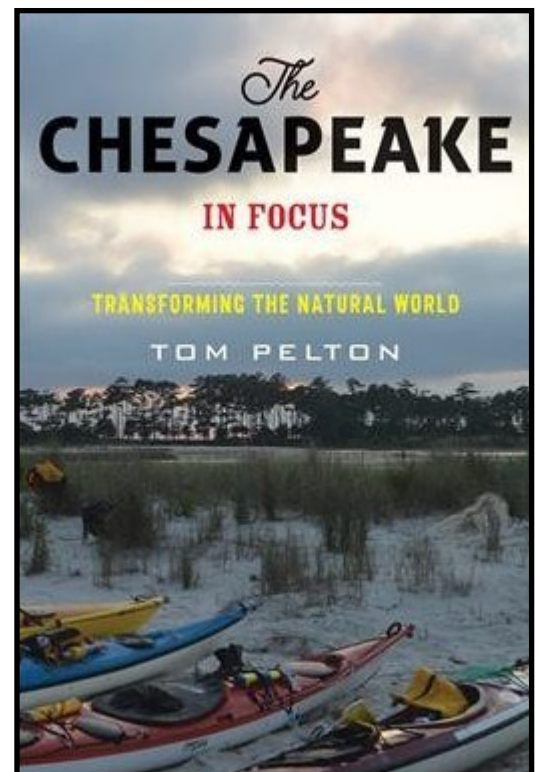


National Geographic Book of Nature Poetry

Compiled by former U.S. Children's Poet Laureate J. Patrick Lewis, this assortment of nature-themed verse is, in a word, breathtaking. The selections represent a variety of styles, time periods, countries of origin, lengths, and themes; all are set against a stunning backdrop of full-bleed photographs!

The Chesapeake in Focus: Transforming the Natural World

Based on Tom Pelton's extensive experience as a journalist and the host of the public radio program *The Environment in Focus*, this sweeping book examines the unique challenges faced by the Chesapeake Bay's tributaries and life forms, profiles heroes of the restoration campaign, and warns of the dangers of anti-regulatory politics that threaten the process.



COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

KEEP IN THE KNOW AND UP TO DATE!

Mark Your Calendars!

Some programs may have a fee. Check with the agency for confirmation & registration.

DIY Spilled Pot Succulent Arrangement
Katora Coffee
June 11: <https://tinyurl.com/y25x7cql>

Food as Medicine
Fredericksburg Food Co-Op
Stafford Hospital
June 13: <https://tinyurl.com/yy8qtpc4>

Gold Fever
Lake Anna State Park
June 15: <https://tinyurl.com/y4xuxux9>

Father's Day Firefly Fireworks
Caledon State Park
June 16: <https://tinyurl.com/y5fbuev>

Summer Solstice Stargazing
Widewater State Park
June 21: <https://tinyurl.com/yxsu944u>

**Environmental Education Series:
The Incredible Journey**
Tri-County/City Soil & Water Conservation District
Salem Church Branch Library
June 24: <https://tinyurl.com/y63lok2l>

Fredericksburg Heritage Festival
Fredericksburg Parks & Recreation
Riverfront Park
July 4: <https://tinyurl.com/yy94becm>

First Saturday Shore Clean Up
Widewater State Park
July 6 & August 3: <https://tinyurl.com/yxsu944u>

Mattaponi Watershed Meeting
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Bowling Green Town Hall
July 10: <https://tinyurl.com/y63lok2l>

Moonlit Kayaking
Stafford County Parks & Recreation
Lake Mooney
July 13: <https://tinyurl.com/yxblbvww>

Pocket's 22nd Birthday Celebration!
Fredericksburg Parks & Recreation
Mott's Run
July 20: <https://tinyurl.com/yy94becm>

Standup Paddle Boarding
Stafford County Parks & Recreation
Aquia Landing
July 21: <https://tinyurl.com/yxblbvww>

**Environmental Education Series:
Sketching Nature**
Tri-County/City Soil & Water Conservation District
Salem Church Branch Library
July 22: <https://tinyurl.com/y63lok2l>

Fred Chats
George Washington Regional Commission
University of Mary Washington—University Center
August 13: <https://tinyurl.com/yyhn5qhg>

Environmental Education Series: The Living Colors
Tri-County/City Soil & Water Conservation District
Salem Church Branch Library
August 26: <https://tinyurl.com/y63lok2l>

What is Water Conservation?
Tri-County/City Soil & Water Conservation District
Porter Branch Library
August 26: <https://tinyurl.com/y63lok2l>

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

On behalf of Cloverfield Enterprises., Jay Hundley received the **2018 Clean Water Farm Award** from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and was recognized with a Resolution from the King George Board of Supervisors.

At left, Tri-County/City Board Member Janet Gayle Harris thanks Mr. Hundley Jr. and Ms. Hundley.

Congratulations!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
JUNE						Clean the Bay Day 1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 World Ocean Day 1 PM: Native Plant Ceremony @ KG
9	10	6:30 PM: DIY Spilled Pot Succulent Arrangement @ Katora Coffee	12	7 PM: Food as Medicine @ Stafford Hospital	14	10 AM: Gold Fever @ Lake Anna State Park
8 PM: Father's Day Firefly Fireworks @ Caledon State Park	17	18	19	20	8:30 PM: Summer Solstice Stargazing @ Widewater SP	22
23	24	25	26	3 PM: The Wonder & Beauty of Weather @ Porter Library	28	29
30						

JULY						
King George, Stafford, Spotsylvania, & Fredericksburg Farmer's Market						
Stafford Farmer's Market						
Spotsylvania Farmer's Market						
Fredericksburg Farmer's Market						
	1	2	3	8 AM: Fxburg Heritage Festival @ Riverfront Park	5	10 AM: First Friday Shore Clean Up @ Widewater SP
7	8	9	4:30 PM: Mattaponi Watershed Meeting @ Bowling Green Town Hall	11	12	8 PM: Moonlit Kayaking @ Lake Mooney
14	15	16	17	18	19	10 AM: Pocket's 22nd Birthday @ Mott's Run
9 AM: Standup Paddle Boarding @ Aquia Landing	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

2 PM Tri-County/City Education Program @ Salem Church Library	Tri-County/City SWCD Monthly Board Meetings @ 8:30 AM
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AUGUST						
				1	2	10 AM: First Friday Shore Clean Up @ Widewater SP
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 First Day of School!	NOON: Fred Chats @ UMW University Center	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	5:30 PM: What is Water Conservation? @ Porter Library	27	28	29	30	31

Tri-County/City Soil & Water Conservation District Directory



District Directors

Giannina Frantz, Chair	Fredericksburg
Mike Broaddus, Vice-Chair	VA Cooperative Extn
Wayne Miller, Secretary	Spotsylvania
Janet Gayle Harris, Treasurer	King George
Jeff Adams	Stafford
Mike Anderson	Stafford
Steve Cameli	Fredericksburg
Jan Massey	Spotsylvania
Richard Street	At-large
Robert Wernsman	King George

Associate Directors

Gordon Linkous	Fredericksburg
John Howe	Stafford
Ray Simms	Spotsylvania

District Staff

Marta Perry	District Manager
Etta Lucas	Conservation Specialist
Jennifer Benson	Administrative Professional
Mariya Hudick	Education Coordinator

Partner Agencies

Amy Walker, DCR	Conservation District Coordinator
Lucia Kossler, NRCS	District Conservationist

TCCSWCD maintains a working relationship with each of the following agencies and organizations to reach common conservation goals:

City of Fredericksburg
 King George County
 Spotsylvania County
 Stafford County
 USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
 USDA – Farm Services Agency
 VA Department of Conservation & Recreation
 VA Cooperative Extension
 Friends of the Rappahannock
 VA State Parks
 VA Native Plant Society
 Tree Fredericksburg
 George Washington Regional Council
 Potomac River Watershed Roundtable
 Rappahannock River Basin Commission
 York River & Small Coastal Basins Roundtable
 VA Department of Environmental Quality
 VA Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
 VA Department of Forestry
 VA Department of Game & Inland Fisheries
 VA Outdoors Foundation
 U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 VA Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

All programs and services of the Tri-County/City Soil and Water Conservation District are available without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, age, marital status, disability, gender, gender identity, political affiliation or any other basis protected by law.