



From the Fall Line

Spring 2020

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



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WHERE WOULD WE BEE WITHOUT POLLINATORS?



Keira Brodsky of King George Middle School was selected as the District winner for the 7th-9th grade category.

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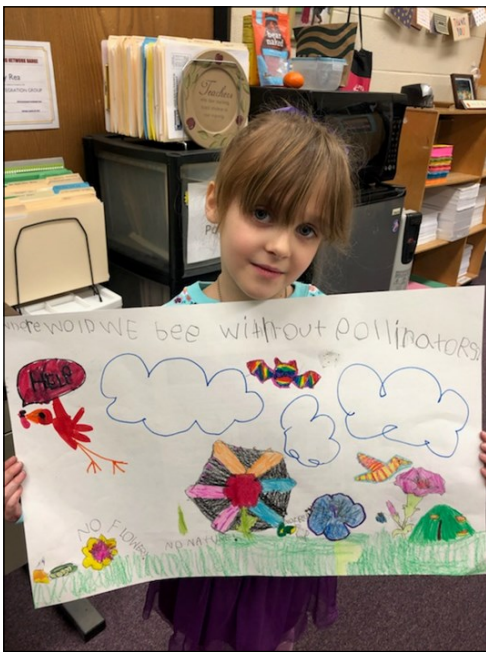
Instagram



Nearly 75% of the world's crops require help from pollinator animals, mostly beneficial insects. Without pollinators, we wouldn't eat! Our well-being is directly tied to theirs. Since the 1950s, pollinator populations have shown concerning signs of decline. Habitat loss, pesticide use, and wide-spread disease are leading causes for this change. The Annual Conservation Poster Contest, sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), helps students convey the importance of our natural resources using art and imagination, and this year's theme is "Where Would We BEE Without Pollinators?" (See "Pollinators" p.2)

“Pollinators” (from p.1)

Students across the District took on the challenge of spreading awareness about pollinators this year through the NACD poster contest. Letting their creativity soar, students’ posters showed the need for pollinators as well as future consequences if they are left unprotected. Over forty posters were submitted to the District for the local level of the poster contest. The District’s Education Committee then had the challenging but always rewarding task of choosing which posters to send to the state-level of the contest run by the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts’ Educational Foundation (VASWCDEF).



Evelyn Graham of Hugh Mercer Elementary School was selected as the District winner for the K-1st grade category.

While the state poster contest is not judged until November, National Pollinator Week is coming up from June 22 through June 28 this Summer. In the meantime, you, too, can help support our invaluable pollinators. **Here are five simple things you can do to BEE the change!**

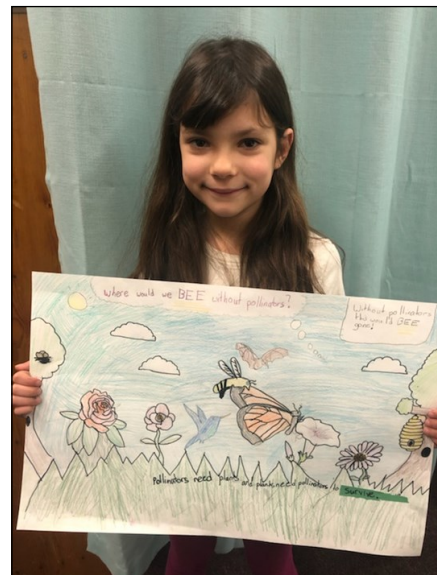
BEE kind to your pollinator friends. Pollinators come in all shapes and sizes. From bees, to birds, to bats, it is important we treat them with kindness. It is very easy to accidentally hurt a bug. BEE careful when examining them!

Better yet: Look - but don’t touch! Small critters are gentle. You can observe them working hard while keeping your fingers away. In general, pollinators won’t hurt you if you leave them BEE. Remember, they are doing an important job when pollinating plants, flowers, vegetables, and fruits.

Keep pollinators safe. Take a look at your gardening supplies. Use pesticides only when absolutely necessary. Pesticides are strongly linked to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) when worker honeybees abandon entire hives. Using less sprays or cutting them out completely can have a big impact on pollinator health in general so that they can return to your garden over and over again.

Invite pollinators to make themselves at home. Create new food and shelter for pollinators to invite them to stay for a while! How? Plant native trees and flowers around your home that pollinators like to visit for food or that they use to take shelter. Planting flowers of different colors will attract a wide variety of these friends. Native plants feed and house many more pollinators than a similar non-native plant can, and they come in all shapes, sizes, and colors, too!*

Bug someone! Why not share what you know with someone? You won’t be a pest if you pass these helpful tips along to your friends and family. Talk to them about what we can all do to protect our pollinators!



Nora Craig of Hugh Mercer Elementary School was selected as the District winner for the 2nd-3rd grade category.

Will you take up this challenge and BEE the change?

*Check out the beautiful “Plant Central Rappahannock Natives” guide for planting inspiration and information. Download it [here](#) or pick up a hard-copy for free at the TCCSWCD office.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK SPOTLIGHT: JAN MASSEY

By Virginia Natural Resource Conservation Service

District Director's Volunteer Conservation Efforts Recognized Statewide

Tri-County/City SWCD Board of Directors representative for Spotsylvania County, Jan Massey, was recently recognized for National Volunteer Week 2020 by the Virginia branch of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Ms. Massey, who is also a local farmer and retired teacher, was highlighted by NRCS for her work as an outstanding Virginia "Earth Team" volunteer, who support the agricultural conservation work of NRCS.

RICHMOND, Va., April 20, 2020 – Successful producers who couple a belief in conservation with a willingness to volunteer can be a great asset to field offices seeking to connect with farmers and forest landowners who haven't yet worked with the NRCS. Jan Massey is just such an individual, helping open new doors for the agency staff in nearby Fredericksburg to provide services for her neighbors in Spotsylvania County.



Jan Massey's commitment to conservation is evident in the many awards her Spotsylvania County farm has earned over the years (photo by Lucee Kossler).

Jan Massey and her husband Bob own Cool Spring Farm, a 470-acre beef and crop operation in Virginia's Spotsylvania County. She has been an outstanding steward of the land and a friend of conservation for many years, participating in various Farm Bill programs.

The Masseys have dedicated about 175 acres to grazing and raising row crops. They began excluding livestock from all the surface water on the farm in 2003. Two years later, they were among Spotsylvania County's first participants in the Conservation Security Program, a precursor to the

NRCS' current Conservation Stewardship Program (also known as CSP). They constructed a livestock winter feed structure and waste storage facility in 2012 and have an active CSP contract today. They've also completed a conservation activity plan for the forested acres on their recognized century farm.

"Jan is often one of our 'go to' producers when we want to experiment with something new because we know she will be an early adopter if science can back up any claims of improvement to natural resource conditions," said Lucee Kossler, district conservationist at the NRCS' Fredericksburg Field Office. "We have also tested practices such as extensive no-till and multi-species cover crops to see how each approach affects soil quality."

The retired teacher taught agriculture in Spotsylvania and Louisa county schools and uses her position on the Tri-County/City (TCC) SWCD board of directors to advocate for this vocational training. She also planned and hosted the first field day TCC and the NRCS' Fredericksburg office had staged in a number of years.

On Sept. 4, 2019, more than 30 local producers and educators gathered at Cool Spring Farm to learn about the conservation practices the Masseys have installed with financial assistance from TCC and NRCS. Jan and Bob spent days cleaning up around their farm, preparing a hay wagon for use as tour transportation and preparing food for visitors. Jan also gathered all of her past contracts so she could effectively speak about her conservation practices.

Away from the farm, Jan serves on the TCC's agricultural technical review subcommittee, making meaningful contributions to the missions of TCC and NRCS in that role. She is instrumental in outreach as she speaks with passion about conservation to anyone who is interested. She's also an active networker in groups such as the Virginia Cattlemen's Association and Virginia Farm Bureau.

"Jan uses every opportunity to help TCC and NRCS get our foot in the door with area farmers who may be interested in our assistance," Kossler said. "She invites and hosts local high school students on her farm and exposes them to farm life and many conservation practices that most would never otherwise have experienced."

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service sent this bulletin at 04/20/2020 09:30 AM EDT

NRCS CORNER



I hope everyone is enjoying the new year and planning for a productive year on the farm for 2020. National Headquarters at NRCS is rolling out brand new planning and ranking databases for us to use this year in the field. We ask for patience as we learn these new systems and use them to help our area producers as much as we can to bring financial assistance to landowners in all your production and conservation efforts. We just returned from our FY20 program rollout state meeting and are excited about some of the changes that have been made since last year. Some common practices have been added and financial incentives increased to better serve our farmers and forest landowners. If anyone is interested in having us come out to your land to see if you qualify for these incentives, give us a call and we'll schedule a time to meet.

5/29/2020: FY20 CSP Classic (New contracts) application deadline

Cover crops will be killed or harvested soon. For maximum benefit, don't kill them any more than 30 days prior to your next crop being planted. If you have any cover crops that NRCS is providing incentive payments for, please call us a week prior to killing so we can make sure we get out to take a look at the fields and certify for payments.

For farmers who receive nutrient management payments from NRCS: If you haven't already, now is the time to schedule your annual meeting with your nutrient management planner to discuss changes for this year's planting season. You'll need your plan prior to planting (and starter fertilizer) in order to follow the plan and receive your payment in the fall.

Practice reminder letters will be going out soon to everyone with whom we hold active contracts. If you receive a letter and have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me or Matt at the office. We want to make sure that we keep everyone on schedule!

Safe planting and I hope everyone has a wonderful spring!

Lucee F. Kossler

USDA-NRCS District Conservationist,
Fredericksburg Service Center
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IT'S TIME FOR FERTILIZER APPLICATIONS!

Even though you did not see much of that white stuff that lays on the ground, normally called “snow,” Winter is indeed over and Spring has sprung.

By now, the small grain cover crops (barley, rye, or wheat) you planted this Fall have fended off weeds and other unwelcomed plant growth. They've reduced soil erosion from rain runoff as well as helped to reduce nonpoint source pollution caused by sediments, nutrients, and chemicals leaving the crop fields this Fall/Winter. The cover crop you planted may now be destroyed; it has done its job to protect the soil, reduce pollution, and trap residual nitrogen from the previous crop.

That means it's time to start thinking about what you need to do to prepare for this year's fertilizer applications. It's time to contact your Nutrient Management Planner for your fertilizer recommendations for this year's crop. Ask yourself, do you have current soil samples (i.e., less than three years old)? If not, you will need to supply your planner with new soil test results. If you already have a Nutrient Management Plan but it needs to be updated, now is also the time to sit down with your planner and review for any changes or revisions.

If you were approved this year for cost-share reimbursement for planting a small grain cover crop this past Fall, you will need a Nutrient Management Plan on file in the District office *before* payment can be made. If you signed up and were approved for cost-share to develop a plan, please contact your Nutrient Management Planner to make any revisions/changes and send a copy to the District office.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call **Etta Lucas**, Conservation Specialist, at (540) 656-2402 or etta.lucas@tccswcd.org.

TAKING VCAP SITE VISITS REQUESTS NOW THROUGH MAY 15

Tri-County/City SWCD is now taking Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) site visit requests. A site visit from TCC staff is the first step towards determining eligibility for VCAP funding. Through VCAP, TCC provides funding for approved projects to improve water quality by reducing stormwater runoff. These projects, also known as Best Management Practices (BMPs), are a direct way to positively affect the health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed by addressing erosion or flooding issues. For more information about VCAP and the BMPs it funds, please visit vaswcd.org/vcap.

****To request a site visit to determine if your site might be appropriate for a VCAP-funded project, download a [Site Visit Request Form](#), and return the completed form by May 15, 2020.****

Submit your completed form and supporting materials via:

- Email to tricountycity@tccswcd.org and include “VCAP Site Visit” in the subject line of the email, or
- U.S. post to TCCSWCD, 4811 Carr Dr., Fredericksburg, VA 22408.

TCC staff will schedule site visits to take place between May 15, 2020 and July 15, 2020. If your site is appropriate for one or more of the 12 BMPs funded by VCAP, you will then be invited to develop a project plan and submit an application to compete for VCAP funding.

We look forward to hearing from you and to working together!

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

KEEP IN THE KNOW AND UP TO DATE!

Mark Your Calendars!

Virtual Park Series

Virginia State Parks

Every Weekday — Noon

Join Park Rangers across the state to learn new environmental, historic, and cultural topics each weekday at noon.

<https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaStateParks/>

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest

Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program

May 15, 22, 29 — Noon

Spend 15 minutes in the forest with Virginia Tech and Virginia Cooperative Extension Foresters each Friday at noon to learn about timely forestry topics.

<https://www.facebook.com/VFLEP/>

Mindful Mondays with Virginia 4-H

Virginia Cooperative Extension

May 18 — 1:00 PM

Virginia 4-H will be hosting a Mindfulness Monday series. Each Monday at 1:00 PM a Zoom session (which will be live-streamed to the Virginia 4-H Facebook as well) will be offered, alternating weekly between mindfulness and Yoga for Kids activities. Although these sessions are designed for a youth audience, all are welcome to join.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/392488352>

Meeting ID: 392 488 352

VCE Ag Today

Virginia Cooperative Extension

May 21 & 28 — 9:00 AM

Join us every Thursday morning at 9:00 am via Zoom for the new VCE AG Today meeting. We will have Extension Specialists and Industry Experts share timely topics for farmers. Our goal is to keep these updates brief, record them for folks who can't join us on that day and time, and to make them relevant for you.

<https://westmoreland.ext.vt.edu/programs/agtoday.html>

Fork It Over Telethon

Downtown Greens

May 16 — 1:00 PM

Worried about missing our yearly Fork it Over Festival? Well, worry no more! This year Downtown Greens is excited to bring you the first ever Fork it Over Telethon! This live telethon will have all the aspects of the festival that you've come to love including, music, raffles, and a silent auction but in a format that can be enjoyed from home!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/159942345422658/>

Nature as Inspiration & Transformation: An Introduction to Nature Poetry

North American Association for Environmental Education

May 19 — 3:00 PM

Join award-winning poet and nature writer, Aimee Nezhukumatathil for a webinar focused on using the inspiration of nature to inspire and transform your writing. Whether you are an aspiring poet yourself or work with young people or adult learners and want some tips about getting started, this is the webinar for you. Aimee will help us all realize how the power of nature can inspire all of us—and give us hope, especially during these difficult times.

<https://naaee.org/eeepro/learning/webinars/webinar-nature-inspiration-and>

Virtual Small Grain Virtual Field Day

Virginia Cooperative Extension

May 21 — 9:00 AM

Our small grain field day will go virtual and will be broadcast on zoom and on Facebook Live!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1292956980893818/>

Climate Change in the Chesapeake Bay

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

May 28 — 2:00 PM

Learn about how the Chesapeake Bay region will be impacted by the effects of climate change from Julie Reichert-Nguyen, Climate Specialist at the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office and Climate Resiliency Workgroup Coordinator for the Chesapeake Bay Program.

<https://www.gotomeet.me/NOAAChesapeakeBayOffice/science2>

Virginia Virtual Farm to Table Series

Virginia Cooperative Extension

June 5, 12, 19, 26—2:00 PM

Join us every Friday as we explore how you can take produce, meats, and dairy from the farm to incorporate into delicious meals at your table! For the month of June, we will discuss shitake mushrooms, turkey, dairy, and beef. Ideas and recipes are shared.

<https://faquier.ext.vt.edu/programs/FarmtoTable.html>

Conservation Advocacy 101 for HOAs

Audubon Naturalist Society

June 17 — 7:00 PM

A number of environmental challenges impact our suburban and urban environments but it's encouraging to know that we can act locally to create positive change! Join us for an interactive ONLINE advocacy workshop focusing on HOAs and Condo Associations. Thinking about your own community, you'll begin to develop your own action plan.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/854412115065220/>

Virtual Master Gardener Online College

Virginia Cooperative Extension

June 25-28

Open to EMGs, trainees, & interns - our annual continuing education event goes online for the first time! Join us June 25-28 for four keynote speakers, four concurrent sessions, and a special welcome/closing.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/673145676845355/>

TRI-COUNTY/CITY SWCD DURING COVID-19

We are committed to maintaining a high level of service to the District as we do our best to navigate the unprecedented events we all find ourselves living through. We have closed our office to the public, but District staff continue operations and services while working remotely via phone and email and by conducting needed site visits in the field while observing best practices for social distancing. We have made a big effort to continue to take applications for agricultural cost-share funding to process payments without delay. We are taking requests for Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) site visits (see page 5). The last day to submit a request is May 15, 2020, which is when we begin the site visits.

In education, we have been able to proceed with the student Conservation Poster Contest (always a bright spot in the year!) and the L. Gordon "Link" Linkous and VASWCD academic scholarships. Unfortunately, a number of other in person education programs have had to be canceled, from local field trips, classroom visits, and Earth Day festivals to the state Youth Conservation Camp to the state and national Envirothon competitions. But that doesn't mean our education program has stopped by any means. Our Education Coordinator, Mariya Hudick, has been in non-stop communication with teachers, school administrators, youth groups, and partners at other agencies to help address the rapidly changing circumstances affecting schools and public events. Equally important, we have been collaborating with our partners to support parents, teachers, and administrators with meaningful resources for their students in these highly unusual circumstances. See her article "Family Fun During the Lockdown!" elsewhere in the newsletter.

While we certainly wish so many of the educational programs that we love to bring you had not needed to be canceled, we know it is a small sacrifice if it helps keep our community safe and healthy. Thank you to all of you for everything you are doing (and not doing!) to help us all get beyond COVID-19 together.

To help limit spread of COVID-19, TCCSWCD's office is temporarily closed to the public. Staff continue working, and we are happy to assist however we can. Please reach out to us by email or phone. We appreciate your understanding and apologize for any inconvenience. Please take care of yourselves and be well.

Agricultural Conservation

Etta Lucas, Conservation Specialist
etta.lucas@tccswcd.org
540-656-2402

Environmental Education

Mariya Hudick, Education Coordinator –
mariya.hudick@tccswcd.org
540-656-2401

Urban/Residential Conservation

Marta Perry, District Manager –
marta.perry@tccswcd.org
540-656-2401

Administrative/General

Jen Benson, Administrative Professional –
jen.benson@tccswcd.org
540-656-2401

FAMILY FUN DURING THE LOCKDOWN

Beat the 'Lockdown Blues' with these interactive and engaging activities that can be accomplished from home, sometimes even on the comfort of your couch. We know that times are tough now, but learning about nature doesn't have to be. Here is a list of resources shared by our teachers, fellow conservationists, and friends who want to make sure our children are still exploring the world. As Mr. & Mrs. Fredricksen from Disney's movie *Up* like to say, "Adventure is out there!"

Family Fun During the Lockdown Facebook Group Page, created by a local community member where members share activities & live interviews with professionals.

Tri-County/City SWCD Facebook Page where we share **Nature Challenges**. These challenges are designed in mind with explorers residing in urban, suburban, and rural homes. Activities can be completed while out in nature or by the window.

Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Education Online Resources, a convenient & easy to access list of online resources.

As for our adult learners, see "**Community Insights**" (p.6) for activities & events!

Tri-County/City Soil & Water Conservation District Directory



District Directors

Giannina Frantz, Chair	Fredericksburg
Jan Massey, Vice-Chair	Spotsylvania
Wayne Miller, Secretary	Spotsylvania
Janet Gayle Harris, Treasurer	King George
Jeff Adams	Stafford
Mike Broadus	Virginia Cooperative Ext.
Charles Koch	Fredericksburg
Tim Makee	Stafford
Ray Simms	At-Large (<i>Appointed</i>)
Robert Wernsman	King George

Associate Directors

John Howe	Stafford
Lucia Street	Spotsylvania

District Staff

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

Partnering Agencies

Liz Stockton, DCR	Conservation District Coordinator
Lucia Kossler, NRCS	District Conservationist

CONTACT US

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TCCSWCD works with 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.