

Concerning Conservation

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Special Issue

January 2014

What We Do:

The Wake Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is here to assist landowners and land users in managing soil, water, plants, and animals effectively. In addition to dedicated technical assistance, financial assistance is provided through state and federal programs to support the implementation of best management practices for the land of Wake County and all that it supports.

Who We Are:

Board of Supervisors

Thomas Dean, Chair
Bill Cole, Vice Chair
Marshall Harvey
Patrick Johnson
Jenna Wadsworth

District Staff:

Natural Resource Conservationists

Teresa Furr
Teresa Hice
Joshua Vetter

Environmental Educator

Sheila Jones

District Director

Dale Threatt-Taylor

USDA NRCS Staff

District Conservationist
Matthew Kinane

Soil Conservationist

Themis Stone

LOCAL FARM FAMILY HONORED FOR CONSERVATION

Cows dot a field, grazing on lush, green grass. It may appear to be a peaceful, pastoral scene to passersby traveling through the Zebulon countryside, but that healthy landscape represents 75 years of hard work by a farm family with a strong conservation ethic.

Such care and attention to natural resource conservation has earned Patrick and his father Thurman R. Johnson the 2013 Farm Family of the Year Award from the Wake Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors. The Johnsons were recently honored at the Wake District's 48th Annual Conservation Awards Celebration for their exemplary stewardship of Wake County's natural resources.

The Johnson's efforts were judged outstanding due to their efforts to convert an erosive row crop operation to a livestock and pasture management operation, going the extra mile to meet and exceed the multiple goals of their conservation plan. Some of the many best management practices that the Johnsons have applied to their land include:

- Installing livestock exclusion fencing to keep animals out of the nearby creek;



From far right to left: Patrick Johnson and his father Thurman R. Johnson are recognized as 2013 Conservation Farm Family of the Year by Wake District board chair Thomas Dean and Wake District natural resource conservationist Teresa Furr.

- Drilling a well and installing a pump and numerous tanks to provide alternative watering sources for their Angus beef cattle, Hair sheep, goats, donkeys, and hogs;
 - Constructing a permanent feeding area that can handle the livestock's concentrated hoof traffic, and
 - Implementing a prescribed grazing plan to provide nutritious pasture forage while monitoring plant heights, the number of animals in a pasture at any time, and testing the soil frequently.
- "It's been an absolute pleasure working with Patrick and Thurman on their conservation plan," said Teresa Furr, Wake District natural resource conservationist. "To date the Johnsons have established or

renovated over 55 acres of pasture land. The practices they have installed, including one of only two permanent livestock feeding areas installed in Wake County, will go a long way in reducing runoff of nutrients and fecal coliform bacteria from the concentrated winter hay feeding area to Little Creek."

"The time and commitment that Patrick and Thurman R. Johnson have put into their conservation efforts on their farm has been tremendous," commented Thomas Dean, Wake District Board Chair. "Their dedication to the stewardship and protection of Little Creek improves the health of the land and protects water quality that not only benefits their farm, but all citizens of Wake County now and in the foreseeable future."

Celebrate Stewardship Week: April 27-May 4, 2014

Stewardship Week began in 1955 to encourage Americans to focus on natural resources conservation. According to the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) that initiated this national observance, the stewardship concept involves personal and social responsibility. It includes a duty to learn about and improve natural resources and as we use them wisely, we



leave a rich legacy for future generations. Everyone has the power to create positive change for the land and all living things. When everyone works together with their local conservation district, that positive power continuously grows.

Each year NACD develops two different sets of Stewardship Week materials that can be shared with 1) congregations in local places of worship or 2) in schools with students of all ages.

To purchase materials, visit the NACD web site

MEET OUR 2013 CONSERVATION WINNERS!

Each year the Wake District Board of Supervisors applauds the hard work and dedication of Wake County's "outstanding conservationists." These are everyday people who go the extraordinary mile in installing conservation practices on their farm, strengthening the economics for local foods and sustainable agriculture, enacting environmental stewardship for the present and future, supporting Wake District in accomplishing its conservation

mission, delivering the conservation message to a broader audience, or educating the next generation to care for the natural resources that sustain us.

These local conservation heroes received engraved plaques and recognition at the Annual Conservation Awards Celebration hosted by the Friends of Wake SWCD. Award winners and their guests were treated to a delicious dinner

served by The Forks Cafeteria of Wake Forest. The entire evening was made possible by generous sponsors: Dr. B.C. Raynor Family Dentistry, Eastside Septic Cleaning Service, Pinter Construction & Development, Inc., NC Farm Bureau, John M. Alexander, Jr., Gordon Smith, and Novozymes Nature's GREEN-RELEAF Composting.

All photos by William Sandifer, Friends of Wake SWCD

The 2013 B.C. Raynor Friend of the District Award was presented to **AgCarolina Farm Credit** for their continual financial support of Wake District's Keeping the Farm Workshop and many other activities and events. From left: AgCarolina Senior Vice-President Tim Pace, Award Sponsors and Friends of Wake District Margaret and B.C. Raynor, AgCarolina Branch Supervisor Gayle Yanes, Loan Officer Seth Cooley, and Credit Analyst Shaunnika Johnson.



The Growers Market of Fuquay-Varina was lauded the 2013 Agricultural Economic Development Award for its tireless efforts to promote local food from local producers. Wake Associate David Adams and Wake District Supervisor Patrick Johnson present the award to Growers Market Chef Joseph Fasy on behalf of the Wake District Board of Supervisors.

For implementing a broad variety of effective agriculture programs that build food security by providing training and education in agricultural skills, **Inter-Faith Food Shuttle** received the 2013 Community Conservation Award.

From left to right: Wake District Supervisor Jenna Wadsworth, Friends of Wake SWCD board member

Sharon Moe, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle associate and volunteer Larry Petrovick, Kay Coleman, Lester Clay, Farm Manager Sun Butler, and CEO/Executive Director Jill Bullard.





Wake County 10% Campaign was awarded the 2013 Dan Wilkinson WRAL Conservation Communication Award for their efforts to grow and strengthen Wake County's local food system. From left: WRAL anchor and reporter Brian Shrader presents the award to Dr. Carol Mitchell of Wake County Cooperative Extension on behalf of WRAL and Wake District Board of Supervisors.

Dr. David L. Lindbo, Professor at NCSU Department of Soil Science, was named 2013 Envirothon Mentor of the Year for dedication in training and nurturing Wake District's middle school and high school Envirothon teams. Dr. Lindbo shakes hands with Wake District Supervisor Marshall Harvey.



For leading hundreds of volunteers in picking up thousands of pounds of litter, **Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department – Natural Resources Division** was honored with the 2013 Big Sweep Excellence Award. Four Raleigh parks provide major cleanup sites for Wake County Big Sweep each fall and spring. From left: Durant Nature Park Manager Amy Corbally, Lake Johnson Park Zone Captain Zac Houston, Friends of Wake SWCD Founder Robin Hammond, Wake District Associate

John Phelps, Jr. and Lake Wheeler Park Manager Chris Murray. (Not shown: Sherry Graham, Director of Walnut Creek Wetland Center.)

This year's "The Living Soil" **Top Ten poster contest winners** came from four elementary schools in Wake County. These 5th graders achieved the best balance between scientific research and original artwork in illustrating the living soil ecosystem and ways people can protect precious topsoil from erosion, compaction, and chemical contamination.



From left to right, front row: AnukshaRam Madhan from Green Hope Elementary in Cary, Jacob Patrick Ford from Hunter Elementary in Raleigh, Luke Boehling from Farmington Woods Elementary in Cary, Aiden Holczer and Rikhil Fellner from Jones Dairy Elementary in Wake Forest. From left to right, back row: Phenix Pace from Hunter Elementary, Hill Brooks and Colin Fleming from Green Hope Elementary, Frank Franciosi – contest sponsor from Novozymes Nature's GREEN-RELEAF Composting, Caroline Sherer and Carmen Stevenson from Hunter Elementary.

Landowners and Farmers:

Do you have an animal waste holding pond, lagoon or sludge pit that is no longer used or is inactive?

Let Wake District assist you with the shutdown to be environmentally friendly. Financial assistance may be available. Contact your Wake District conservationist at 919-250-1050.



When the land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land—when both end up better by reason of partnership—then we have conservation.

*~Aldo Leopold,
1887-1948
American author and
conservationist*

NEW SOIL-TEST FEE THIS WINTER

Soil tests submitted for analysis between December 2013-March 2014 will now cost \$4 per sample. During these four winter months, the state analysis lab receives the vast majority of soil samples from farms in preparation for spring planting.

To lessen the lab's backlog during this busy "peak season", the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) initiated this first-time fee for two reasons: 1) to encourage growers to submit soil samples earlier which will balance the sample load throughout the year, and 2) to use receipts to improve and sustain the soil-testing program.

Soil samples received during peak season will be processed in the order received without any guarantees regarding turnaround time. However, clients can purchase NCDA&CS expedited shippers to receive a guaranteed turnaround time of 10 business days. This year, 525 shippers will be sold. The anticipated 2014 price for a 36-sample shipper is \$200.

Soil samples submitted between April-November will continue to be analyzed without a fee because of funding derived from a statewide fee on commercial fertilizer.

Updated soil test forms and soil sample boxes are available in the offices of Wake Soil and Water Conservation District and Wake County Cooperative Extension.

Need more information or have questions? Contact the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division directly at 919-733-2655 or visit their web page at www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/sthome.htm.

2014 CONSERVATION CALENDAR

JANUARY

1 Happy New Year!

FEBRUARY

2-5 NACD National Meeting

Friends of Wake SWCD will be honored with the "2013 Friend of Conservation Award" by the National Association of Conservation Districts. Congratulations to our Friends!

5 Breakfast Kick-Off Southern Farm Show

Farmers and landowners are invited to attend the Wake County Agribusiness Council Annual Breakfast. Breakfast is served at 7:15AM in the Hunt Horse Complex, NC State Fairgrounds. Tickets are \$10 per person and can be purchased at the door or by calling Wake District at 919-250-1050.

7 Conservation Stewardship Program

Producers interested in participating in the CSP program can submit applications to NRCS through Feb. 7th. To apply, contact NRCS District Conservationist Matt Kinane at 919-250-1055 or matt.kinane@nc.usda.gov.

11 Wake SWCD Board Meeting

Farmers and landowners are welcome to attend! Please call 919-250-1050 for time and location.

12 Keeping The Farm Workshop FREE! The 9th annual workshop designed to help Wake County landowners with estate planning, leases and liabilities, food safety rules, and more. Free lunch if registered by February 7th. Call 919-250-1050 or email keepfarm2014@gmail.com.

14 Answers To Your Most Taxing Questions

Forest landowners can submit timber tax questions to expert Linda Wang, the National Timber Tax Specialist for the U.S. Forest Service. Wang will answer selected questions in the March issue of Forestry Notes. Questions can be submitted by via Twitter [@forestrynotes](https://twitter.com/forestrynotes) or by sending an email to forestrynotes@email.nacdnet.org. Please add "Timber Tax" in the subject line. Deadline to submit questions is Feb. 14th.

18 On Feb. 18, locations in every state across the country will host Cover Crops and Soil Health

Forums where farmers will have the opportunity to learn from one another while exploring local and national perspectives on cover crops. Please RSVP to ensure adequate seating and to get specific details about the forum as programs will vary by location. Join the conversation at one of these locations near Wake County.

Contact Stuart Lee at 919-873-7318 to register at no cost. Program begins at 10:00 AM, EST.

*NRCS and FSA State Offices, 4407 Bland Road, Room 265, Raleigh, NC 27609
Nashville County Ag Center, 1006 Eastern Avenue, Nashville, NC 27856*

MARCH

11 Wake SWCD Board Meeting Call 919-250-1050 for time and location.

20 First Day of Spring / Spring Equinox

21 Area IV Envirothon

Wake County Envirothon teams compete against 10 other Districts' teams at the Warren County Armory in Warrenton, NC. Go Wake teams, go!

APRIL

8 Wake SWCD Board Meeting Call 919-250-1050 for time and location.

22 Earth Day

Farmers and operators work every day of the year to protect rich soil, clean water, fresh air, healthy forests and wildlife.

April 27-May 4 Stewardship Week

A national observance to celebrate what we can do to conserve precious natural resources.

To purchase educational materials for church or school, visit NACD's web site at www.nacdstore.org/communityoutreachmaterialsampwstewardship.html