

# Transylvania County Soil & Water Conservation District



## ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022

# INTRODUCTION

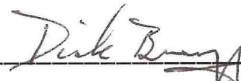
The following report reflects the activities and accomplishments of the Transylvania County Soil & Water Conservation District for fiscal year 2021-2022. These accomplishments were only achievable because of the strong relationships that the district has built over the years with the citizens of Transylvania County and our many partners in conservation.

We hope that you will enjoy learning specifically about the many conservation improvements we have assisted our customers with during the past year. We are equally proud of the educational activities in our local schools and our outreach efforts through community conservation.

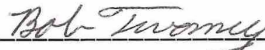
Thank you to the agencies who contributed to the Transylvania County Soil and Water Conservation District financially, and to those who gave of their time by helping us successfully implement all of our technical assistance and education programs.

Thank you!

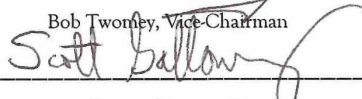
The Transylvania SWCD Board of Supervisors



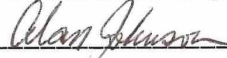
Dick Bragg, Chairman



Bob Twomey, Vice-Chairman



Scott Galloway, Secretary/Treasurer



Alan Johnson, Member



Joffrey Merrill, Member



# DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS



**Allocated \$26,645 through the NC Ag Cost Share Program** for landowners to install water quality practices.

**Planned and installed 6 new contracts and obligated \$592,769.00** in Transylvania County for conservation BMPs.



**Completed 25 debris removal projects** in the French Broad River with **\$45,925** in funds.

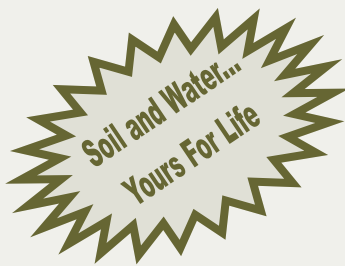
Rented the ag equipment to **20 landowners** for use on **273 acres**.



**Partnered with the US Forest Service, Transylvania County and the NC Dept. of Agriculture** in the **Good Neighbor Program** for the third year.

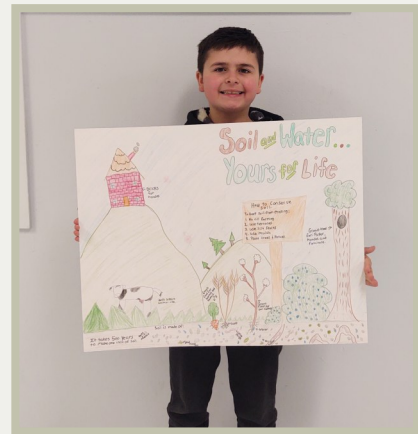
# DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

The district **secured federal and state grants** to help repair the damage left by Tropical Storm Fred.



Offered **virtual presentations** and had **over 50 posters** completed, and **8 essays** written for our contests.

Had 1 **Area 1** conservation contest poster winner!



**Participated** in several outreach activities.

Local college student **wins** state-wide "**Careers in Conservation**" scholarship.



# DISTRICT CONSERVATION

## NC AG COST SHARE PROGRAM

During fiscal year 2021-2022, the District **allocated \$26,645 in cost share assistance funds** to landowners in Transylvania County for Best Management Practices that improve water quality. These funds were applied as follows:

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	Planned	Installed
Non-field farm road repair	714 ft.	714 ft.
Pasture/Hayland Renovation	55 ac.	17 ac.
Ag Road Stabilization	–	170 ft.
Livestock Exclusion Fencing	–	380 ft.
HUAP	–	235 sq. yd.
Diversion	–	130 ft.
Grassed Waterway	–	60 ft.
Livestock Feeding Area	–	1 ea.

These BMPs helped to save **66 Tons of soil, 180 pounds of phosphorus** and **360 pounds of nitrogen** from polluting our streams.



# DISTRICT CONSERVATION

## TROPICAL STORM FRED

On August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Tropical Storm Fred produced rainfall amounts that caused damage to several areas of the county. In the Balsam Grove community, several bridges were washed out or damaged along with streambank erosion and debris jams. Sapphire and Toxaway also sustained damage to several road culverts along with some severe landslides. The storm also contributed to several debris jams and streambank erosion along the French Broad River from Rosman to Penrose. Once the Emergency Watershed Protection Program was approved for Transylvania County through the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Jeff Parker and a representative from the Madison County SWCD viewed a list of damaged sites provided by the county Emergency Management Services and Fire Marshall's office. Out of all the sites reviewed, NRCS approved 6 sites for streambank stabilization. The Grant and Agreement Award was in the amount of \$597,176, which is 75% of the estimated construction cost and 10% of the engineering cost.

On July 5, 2022, TSWCD received notification from the Commissioner of Agriculture's office of the Funding Offer of \$307,371 through the new program from the Division of Soil & Water Conservation called the Streamflow Rehabilitation Program (StRAP). It was set up to cover the remaining 25% of construction costs of the EWP program.

With costs for most things being higher than usual, it is estimated that engineering will probably cost 20% of construction costs, resulting in a shortfall of about \$28,525. The NC Department of Public Safety will provide the funds needed to bridge this gap and has approved an additional \$75,000. At the printing of this report, the county has an RFQ advertised to find an Engineering Firm to design repairs needed and assist with the reporting requirements of the EWP and StRAP programs.



EWP Estimated Assistance:	\$597,176
StRAP Estimated Assistance:	\$307,371
NC Dept. of Public Safety:	\$75,000
<b>Total Financial Impact:</b>	<b>\$979,547</b>



# DISTRICT CONSERVATION

## COUNTY DEBRIS REMOVAL

The district used **\$45,925 from County Commissioners** to remove debris from the French Broad River in the county. The district was able to **complete 25 projects** that **affected approximately 825 linear feet** of streambank. Large trees and other debris are not only causing severe erosion on streambanks, but are also safety hazards for recreational users of the river. Below are before and after pictures of some of the projects.

Project - Before



Project - After



Project - Before



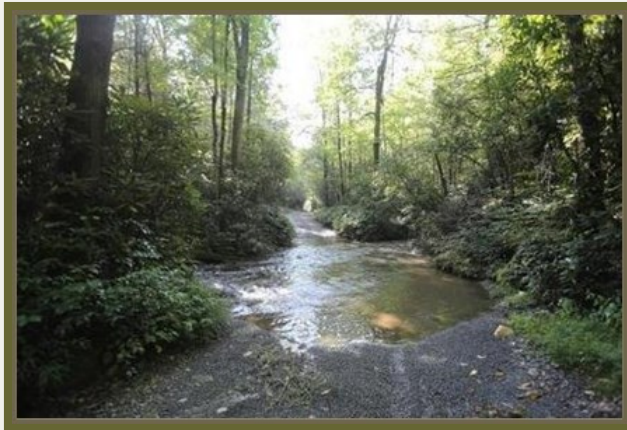
Project - After



# DISTRICT CONSERVATION

## GOOD NEIGHBOR PROGRAM

The District is honored to be partnering with the US Forest Service and Transylvania County in a pilot program called the “**Good Neighbor Program**”. This project will replace an existing ford-type crossing and footbridge in the Cove Creek area of the Pisgah National Forest with an arch style “aquatic organism passage”. The new structure will eliminate contaminants from vehicular traffic and improve water quality for many organisms, including the 3 species of trout that are found in this stretch of stream.



## EQUIPMENT RENTAL

Thanks to previous TVA grants, we have a lime spreader, conservation seeder, fertilizer spreader, 2 weed wipers, manure spreader, post auger and driver, and a trailer to haul the equipment. Farmers have been very receptive to the rental equipment and are glad to have access to this equipment to make improvements to their fields and pastures.

For FY 2022, the equipment was rented by **20 landowners, for a total of 27 days** for use on about **273 acres**. Rental fees/charges **brought in \$1,300**, which was set aside in a reserve account for maintenance and repair of the equipment.





# NRCS CONSERVATION

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is an agency under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We offer technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers to put conservation practices on the land. There are a wide variety of practices that can be utilized to address resource concerns including but not limited to Fencing (exclusion and interior), Livestock watering tanks and pipeline, creek/stream crossings, cover crops, prescribed burning. We also work with producers to help enhance pollinator habitat on their land.

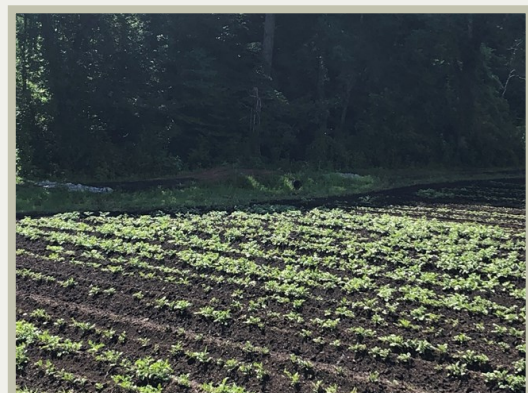
One of the main Farm Bill Programs that NRCS administers is the Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP) to assist landowners in applying conservation best management practices (BMP's) on their working agricultural lands. EQIP supports the conservation priorities established for the Transylvania County SWCD. BMP's are used to correct natural resource concerns on a variety of land uses, including pasture, cropland, and forestland. NRCS uses technical, engineering, and financial resources to assist landowners with these projects.

Another Farm Bill Program that NRCS administers is the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) which is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural producers to improve conservation systems by improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities and undertaking additional conservation activities.

During the 2021/2022 Program Year, NRCS obligated **\$592,769.00** to **6 new contracts** in Transylvania County. These contracts contain best management practices including livestock watering systems, stream crossings, exclusion fencing and stream restoration. They are contracted on a total of **224** acres of farmland in Transylvania County.

Best management practices that have been installed in Transylvania County over the past year include pasture management practices such as livestock watering systems, fencing, and heavy use area protection, along with grassed waterways and grade control structures for erosion control on crop land.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP). This program is administered by NRCS during times of natural disasters such as Tropical Storm Fred that impacted Transylvania County in August, 2021. To date, over **\$640,000.00** has been secured to assist with recovery efforts in Transylvania County. This will include stabilization and repair of critically failing stream banks that are impacting roads, houses, and bridges along with removal of debris that has been deemed an eminent threat to life or property.



# CONSERVATION EDUCATION

## POSTER CONTESTS

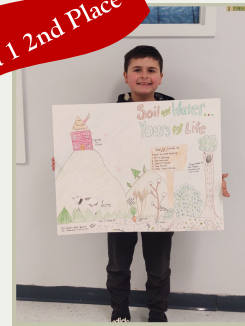
Due to continued restrictions from CoVID-19, Jo Ann McCall, Education Coordinator, developed and distributed a virtual presentation on the contest theme, "Soil and Water...Yours for Life." The district received several posters, essays and computer slide show presentations.



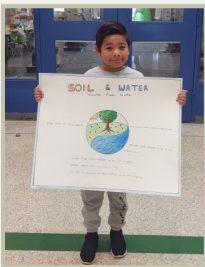
3rd Grade 1st Place  
Mia Nesslein

# 3rd & 5th grade Contests

Area 1 2nd Place



5th Grade 1st Place  
Christian Cade



3rd Grade 2nd Place  
Emanuel Melgarejo



3rd Grade 3rd Place  
Jet Stanley



3rd Grade Honorable Mention  
Bentley Allison



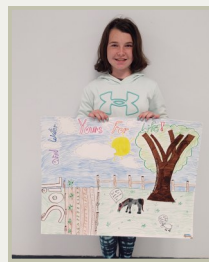
3rd Grade Honorable Mention  
Kade Justice



5th Grade 2nd Place  
Raleigh Collier



5th Grade 3rd Place (tie)  
Scarlett Conley



5th Grade 3rd Place (tie)  
Sophie Owen



5th Grade 3rd Place (tie)  
Charlie Faulkner

# CONSERVATION EDUCATION

## 6th GRADE POSTER, ESSAY & PPT CONTESTS



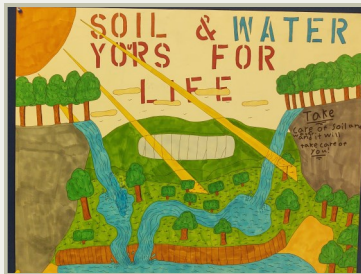
6th Grade 1st Place- Poster  
Gracie Shields



6th Grade 1st Place- Essay  
Katelynn Owens



6th Grade 1st Place- PPT  
Rylan Causby



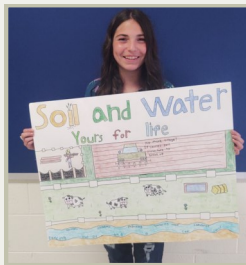
6th Grade 2nd Place-  
Poster  
Loren Jones



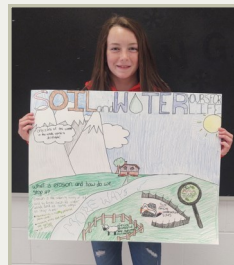
6th Grade 2nd Place-  
Essay  
Victoria Ramsey



6th Grade 2nd Place-  
PPT  
Noah Morgan



6th Grade 3rd Place- (tie)  
Poster  
Veronica Jacques



6th Grade 3rd Place- (tie)  
Poster  
Ella McNeely



6th Grade 3rd Place-  
Essay  
Everett Ennis



6th Grade 3rd Place-  
PPT  
Payton Hutchins

Honorable Mention:  
Poster: **Madison Combs and Kinslee Wilson**  
Essay: **Katie Futrelle**  
PPT: **Ayden Gibson and Isabel Padilla**

# SPECIAL RECOGNITION

## SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

**Shade Wilbanks** received the NC Foundation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Careers in Conservation \$1,000 scholarship. Shade graduated from Brevard High School in 2020 and has been attending Mount Olive University, majoring in Ag. Education.

The district is very proud of Shade and wishes her the best in her academic and career pursuits!



## DIVISION STAFF

The supervisors and staff of our District want to acknowledge the assistance received from **Vernon Cox**, Director, **David Williams**, Deputy Director, **Josh Vetter**, Technical Sections Chief, **Lisa Fine**– Environmental Specialist, **Rachel Smith**– Environmental Engineer, **Layne Owen**– Environmental Engineer, **Bob Dennis**– Engineering Technician, **Loring McIntyre**- Engineering Technician, **Taryn Hendrickson**– Engineering Technician, **Dalton Buchanan**- Soil Scientist and **Cayle Aldridge**- Regional Coordinator, all with the Division of Soil and Water. We consider them valuable assets to our organization.



## IN MEMORY



Al Plemmons, TSWCD Supervisor from 1987 to 1994, passed away on February 1, 2022 at age 88. After a career with Lowes Home Improvement, Al began farming full time. In 1983, his farm won “Conservation Farm Family” for the best management practices he installed. Al also received an award in 2005 for serving as president of the Transylvania Farm Bureau for 10 years. He was inducted into the WNC Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2007. Al and his contributions will be greatly missed in the community.

# PROGRAMS SUMMARY

The following table captures the impact of the District's programs for FY 2021-2022 and represents the commitment to fulfill the mission of the district of improving water quality and educating citizens about conservation.

Program	Impact
NC Ag. Cost Share Program	Saved 66 Tons of soil; 180 # of Phosphorus; 360 # of Nitrogen
NRCS- EQIP	Conservation practices planned on 224 acres
Equipment Rental	\$1,300 revenue; Improvements on 273.5 acres
Debris Removal	25 projects completed; 825 linear feet of streambank
Education Programs	60 contest entries; 25 district winners; 1 Area winner

## PARTNERS



# IN CONCLUSION

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Transylvania SWCD's mission:*

*“to conserve, enhance, and promote the natural resources of Transylvania County by providing technical assistance, environmental education, and economic incentives to county citizens through a diversified voluntary program designed to meet changing needs.”*



## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS & STAFF



(L to R) Jeff Parker- District Director, Bob Twomey- Vice Chairman, Jo Ann McCall -Education Coordinator, Joffrey Merrill -Member, Scott Galloway- Secretary/Treasurer, Dick Bragg- Chairman, Alan Johnson- Member, Emily Nelson- NRCS District Conservationist

