

RUNOFF

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM HANOVER-CAROLINE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Vol. 42 Ed. 2

2019-20 Newsletter

Winter

Soil Health Experts Tour Keenbell Farm in Rockville, Virginia



Soil health experts and conservationists from the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Hanover-Caroline SWCD and others visited Keenbell Farm in Rockville to talk with owner/operator, C.J. Isbell and other local farmers about how they are adopting practices and changing systems to improve



soil health.

Isbell shared his approach to conserving soil health, its challenges and how long-term planning has benefited his farm economics. Visiting farmers discussed how results are increasing their profits, protecting water quality and contributing to a more resilient and sustainable future of food production. The farm tour, which took place in late October, hosted more than two dozen farmers and conservationists.

Hanover-Caroline SWCD Recognizes Conservation Practices

At its fall Conservation Awards Banquet, the Hanover-Caroline Soil and Water Conservation District named three 2019 awardees for their outstanding conservation practices in Caroline County.

Recipients and their honors were Allen and Brenda Tignor, the Clean Water Farm Award; Dennis and Jill Thompson's Savanna Watch, BMP Forestry Award; and the Lake Caroline Property Owners Association, the Urban Conservation Award.

Clean Water Farm Award

Located in the small community of Tignor, Virginia, is the successful, 4th generation farming operation of Allen and Brenda Tignor, who implement an array of best management practices (BMPs) to eliminate nutrient and sediment pollution in Virginia waterways. The Tignors' operation includes Black Angus and Simmental cattle, 1350 acres of cropland, 20 acres of hay and 60 acres of pasture. The Tignors have embraced the concept of rotational grazing, moving cattle herds regularly to maximize the quality and quantity of forage growth. They have also created more than 67 acres of riparian buffers, generally more than 100 feet wide, excluding their cattle from more than a mile of streams. In addition to water quality measures on pastureland, the Tignors plant multi-species cover crops during the fallow season to prevent soil erosion, scavenge excess nutrients, and improve soil health. Continuous no-tillage techniques are implemented on all cropland. The Tignors also received the prestigious 2019 York River Basin Clean Water Farm Award from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, which recognizes one standout farm in each of Virginia's major watersheds, annually.



BMP Forestry Award

After retiring from



long careers in conservation and agriculture, the Dennis and Jill Thompson acquired fifty acres and a house on the South River in Caroline County in 2015, which they named Savanna

Watch. During their first year, the Thompsons raised a barn, installed exterior fencing, and renovated eight acres of pasture for Jill's horses, which she rotationally grazes in multiple paddocks. Jill introduced trees into her pastures for future shade by protecting native seedlings and transplanting saplings from the surrounding forest. The Thompsons have developed a management plan for longleaf pine, native warm season grasses, forbs, and shrubs. They will use prescribed burning and livestock grazing to help manage their savanna.

Urban Conservation Award

Lake Caroline Property Owners Association uses best management practices to keep its community a pretty and healthy place to live. Those practices include implementation of year-round lake dredging, debris removal and maintenance of sediment forebays, establishment of a mandatory five-year septic system pump-out, weekly water testing, establishment of a 110-foot RPA buffer, participation in the Mattaponi TMDL plan, and recreation and lake access are stabilized for improved runoff mitigation and aesthetics. The Lake Caroline POA has conducted a Continuity of Operations (COOP) exercise, bringing together fire, sheriff, emergency services and utilities to formulate an emergency plan to be prepared for natural disasters.



Hanover Fourth Graders Explore Soil Tunnel Hanover Ag Day



As part of their October field trip to Poor Farm Park for Ag Day, sponsored annually by Colonial Farm Credit, Hanover fourth graders learned about characteristics of soil and stormwater runoff. Hanover-Caroline SWCD staff assisted students in demonstrating how groundcover reduces stormwater runoff, erosion, and non-point source pollution using model runoff boxes and a pretend "storm." Students were then invited to crawl through the District soil tunnel model to observe different layers of soil and animals that make their homes in the soil.



Upcoming Events



21st Annual
Virginia Biological Farming Conference
January 11 -13, 2020
The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center
Roanoke, Virginia

The 21st annual Virginia Biological Farming Conference is Virginia's premier organic and sustainable agricultural conference! The Conference brings together farmers, gardeners, eaters, educators and advocates of biological and organic agriculture.

The three day Conference includes: Pre-Conference intensive workshops, 48 sessions, presentations and panel discussions, 50 tradeshow exhibitors, locally sourced farm meals and book sales with author signings. The Conference highlights include a Silent Auction and networking opportunities including regional meetings and fireside chats, and the Taste of Virginia Expo & Social. Featuring morning yoga for farmers and opening remarks and a fireside chat with Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Bettina Ring.

Click [here](#) for VABF Conference details and registration.

[District Board Meetings](#)

**Hanover-Caroline SWCD Board meetings are open to the public.
Click below to review the 2020 H-C SWCD Board meeting calendar and recent meeting minutes.**

[H-C SWCD Board Meeting Schedule 2020](#)
[September 2019 Board Meeting Minutes](#)
[October 2019 Board Meeting Minutes](#)



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We work with the people who work the land.

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Many Thanks to Our Runoff Sponsors!



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