



STOKES SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD)

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SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S CELEBRATE 75th YEAR ANNIVERSARY



Stokes Soil & Water Board from 1960's pictured above (l to r) front row: D.G. Richardson, Roger Calloway, W.A. Tucker; back row: Elwood Priddy, Sam Young

This year Soil & Water Conservation District's across the nation will celebrate their 75th year anniversary. Soil & Water Conservation District's and their governing Boards of Supervisors were formed nationwide by legislation adopted by individual states in 1937 out of concern for the nation's soil and water resources. This concern grew out of the devastating Dust Bowl in the west, severe water erosion in the south, and other conservation problems of the 1930's and even earlier. Today there are 96 Soil & Water Conservation District's in the state of North Carolina.

Through the efforts of Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett, a North Carolina native from Anson County, and his close working relationship with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a model law known as the Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law was drafted which would enable states to create local soil and water conservation districts. On February 27, 1937, President Roosevelt corresponded with state governors across the United States, urging each state to adopt legislation similar to the "model law". That same year, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a soil & water conservation districts law known as NC General Statute 139, and the Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District, in the home county of Dr. Bennett, was chartered on August 4, 1937 as the very first soil & water conservation district in the nation. By 1947, all of the other states and the territories of Hawaii and Alaska had passed legislation which created local Districts.

The Soil & Water Conservation District in Stokes County has a long history. It first began operation in 1941 as a part of the Dan River Conservation District which was composed of Rockingham, Stokes, Caswell and Person Counties. Then later in July of 1960 the Stokes Soil & Water Conservation District was organized when the Dan River Conservation District separated and became individual districts ♦

NEW STATE COST SHARE PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO PROMOTE WATER QUANTITY

The Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP) is a new state cost share program that was authorized through Session Law 2011-145 to assist farmers and landowners in doing any one or more of the following: Identify opportunities to increase water use efficiency, availability and storage; Implement best management practices (BMPs) to conserve and protect water resources; Increase water use efficiency; and Increase water storage and availability for agricultural purposes. For more information on AgWrap contact Tom Smith with the Stokes SWCD office at 336.593.2846 ext. 3 ♦

LOCAL FARMERS GROW AWARD WINNING HEIRLOOM TOMATOES

Local farmers Bill & Ann Smith have found their niche – growing beautiful, succulent heirloom tomatoes full-time on their "Certified Naturally Grown" 55 acre farm in Walnut Cove. Heirloom tomatoes are in high demand at most Farmers Markets but growing them is not as easy as you think and does not come without risk. They often split, bruise, and succumb to disease more easily than hybrid tomatoes making it challenging as well as fulfilling getting the end product to market.

The Smith's have worked for years to create a productive, healthy, sustainable environment for their tomatoes. They grow all their plants in their greenhouse from germinated seed that they save from year to year. They use drip irrigation and practice a 3-year crop rotation to reduce the potential of disease. This year they planted 1,700 plants in the spring then later planted 700 more in the early summer season. They also plant test plots for NC State University to assist with the research of disease resistant hybrid plants that carry the desired heirloom flavor.

The Smith's grow 45 different heirloom-tomato varieties such as: Chocolate Stripe, Verna Orange, Cherokee Chocolate, Pineapple, Indigo Rose, Black Zebra, and Garden Peach to name a few. As you can tell from the names, these tomatoes are not your usual red tomatoes. Many come in different colors but all carry full old-fashioned flavor that will have you wanting more. In fact, the heirlooms are so good, several varieties have placed 1st in the annual Winston Salem Journal Tomato Tasting Contest.

Bill & Ann have done a great job doing what they love...preserving a unique, old-fashioned, full-flavored product for future generations that can be enjoyed by all. Visit their website at www.oldtownfarmonline.com to learn more about their productive farming operation ♦



Plants grown from seed in greenhouse



2 acre tomato field



Chocolate Stripe tomato

DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

James Booth, *Chairman*
Marvin Cavanaugh, *Vice Chairman*
Willis Overby, *Secretary/Treasurer*
John East, *Member*
Willard Nelson, *Member*

STAFF

Dede DeBruhl, *District Conservationist*
Tom Smith, *District Soil/Watershed Conservationist*
Rodney Wright, *Watershed Coordinator*
Janice Pack, *Adm. Asst./Education Coordinator*

STOKES SOIL & WATER 2012 AWARD RECIPIENTS



I to r: back row-Rodney & Kenny Rogers; front row-Crystal, Emilie, Brittany & Virginia Rogers

On May 17 the Stokes Soil & Water Conservation District held its annual awards banquet at Mountain View Community Center in King. At this banquet Rodney Rogers and his family – wife Crystal, and children Brittany, Alex and Emilie were recognized as the 2012 Conservation Farm Family of the Year for applying sound conservation on their farm in Westfield. The Rogers farm consists of 145 acres of tobacco in rotation with small grain and fescue as well as 140 acres of wheat cover crop. Many best management practices have been installed on their farm over the years to protect water quality and prevent erosion...Congratulations to the Rogers family for a job well done.



I to r: Marvin Cavanaugh, Laura Lane

Another highlight of the evening was the recognition of the 2012 Conservation Teacher of the Year...Ms. Laura Lane, an 8th grade Science teacher at Chestnut Grove Middle School. Ms. Lane teaches science with a hands-on approach allowing students to participate in environmental projects involving wildlife and water quality studies as well as the Shad in the Classroom program sponsored by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission & NC Museum of Natural Science in an effort to promote environmental stewardship. Congratulations Mrs. Lane – our 2012 Conservation Teacher of the Year.



I to r: Kendall Harden, Ruth Ann Harden, Jonathan Young

Others recognized at the banquet include the 2012 Forest Landowner of the Year, Kendall & Ruth Ann Harden, from the Francisco community, who was awarded a plaque from the NC Forest Service for practicing sound forest management on their 31 acre farm. The Harden's maintain their forestland by select cutting weak trees and then replanting native tree species such as short leaf pine, native red cedar, green ash, bald cypress, black tupelo, and river birch to promote forest diversity. The Harden's overall objective is to keep the land healthy and productive. Congratulations Kendall & Ruth Ann – our 2012 Forest Landowner of the Year ♦

"Visit our website at www.stokesswcd.org to view our 2011-12 Annual Report"

COST SHARE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR LANDOWNERS

If you have erosion problems or water quality issues on your farm, you may be eligible to receive cost share assistance through the NC Agriculture Cost Share Program, the Dan River 319 Grant Program, and/or the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. All of these voluntary programs have proven successful in addressing agricultural non-point source pollution problems. Eligible participants may receive up to 75% cost share funding on practices such as riparian buffer restoration, excluding livestock from streams, installing alternative watering systems and ag. wells, pasture renovation, heavy use area protection, converting cropland to permanent perennial vegetation or trees, long term no-till planting, stream-bank protection. Poultry and livestock waste & mortality concerns are also addressed through the cost share programs. Examples of eligible practices could include drystacks and poultry incinerators or composters. If you are interested in improving the water quality on your farm, please call the Stokes Soil & Water Conservation District at 336.593.2846 ext. 3 for an application and information on program availability ♦

NO-TILL SOD DRILL AVAILABLE FOR RENT - \$10/Acre...CONTACT OUR OFFICE FOR DETAILS

Volunteers are needed to participate in the annual Big Sweep – Litter Cleanup on October 6th in Stokes County. Those who volunteer will be picking up litter on roadsides, streams and open spaces. Bags, gloves, pencils and data cards furnished. Please contact Sara Jo Durham at 336.427.4497 to volunteer ♦

CHECK OUT OUR FAIRBOOTH IN THE AMERICAL LEGION BLDG. AT THE STOKES COUNTY FAIR

TREE SEEDLINGS FOR SALE – To order tree seedlings contact the NC Forest Service at 1-888-NCTREES or go to www.dfr.state.nc.us. Different varieties of hardwoods, pines and cedars are available at great prices ♦



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