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# Catawba County Soil & Water Conservation District

## Annual Report 2006



This report is a condensed summary of the Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District's activities for fiscal year 2006 which covers the period from July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006.

The Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a governmental subdivision of the State of North Carolina and is governed by a five-member Board, three of whom are elected and two appointed. North Carolina law charges them with the responsibility of planning and carrying out conservation activities that will best conserve the natural resources of Catawba County. They meet monthly, at 10:00 AM the first Friday Morning of each month on the third floor of the Agricultural Resources Center in the District/Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Newton. All meetings are open to the public.



Current members of the District board are L-R: Gene Wilson-Sec./Treasurer; James Hardin- Vice Chair.; Ray Henderson- Chairman; Worth Killian- Member; Tom Bollinger- Member



## Envirothon

The Envirothon is an annual competition held for high school students. Eight area competitions are held across the state in the fall and early spring and a statewide competition is held in the late spring. Winners of the state competition attend the national competition during the summer.

Designed as a way to teach kids about environmental education, high school teams come together to compete with one another in five subjects: Wildlife, Forestry, Soil, Aquatics, and Current Environmental Issues. See pg. 6

## RESOURCE CONSERVATION WORKSHOP



Pictured is Tom Devine - Resource Conservation delegate and (right) Ray Henderson, Chairman of the Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District at the Sept 1, Board meeting. Tom presented a favorable report of the workshop he and Zack Lowman (not pictured) attended at North Carolina State University in Raleigh for a week in June.

The Resource Conservation Workshop is presented each year by the Division of Water Quality and the North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts. At least one student sponsored by the Catawba Soil and Water District so that they may attend a week of intensive study and participation in a wide range of conservation topics including Soil

Characteristics, wildlife & Fisheries, Forestry, Water Quality and Watershed Management with the primary objective of learning about natural resources and their management in today's environment.

### Catawba Soil and Water Conservation Contest Winners for 2006

The Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District Speech, Poster and Essay contest was held February 10, at the First United Methodist Church in Newton., following a dinner prepared by members of the Parker Sunday school class. The theme for this year's contest was Water... The Cycle of Life.

Contest Winners:

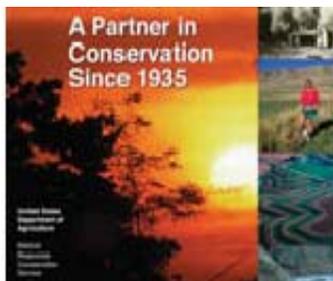
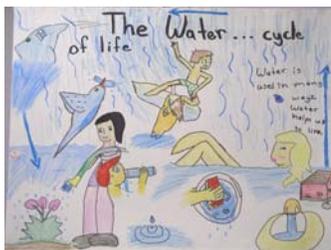
Sixth Grade Poster Nanami Miyazaki, Clyde Campbell

Fifth Grade Poster Adaleena Xiong, Claremont

Seventh Grade Speech Hallie Banish, Arndt

Eighth Grade Speech Daniela Mytsa, Jacobs Fork

Sixth Grade Essay Adam Smith, Clyde Campbell



### 2006 NRCS Annual Report Catawba County, North Carolina

**District Conservationist Richard Grant**

*"Out of a long list of nature's gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil." - Hugh Hammond Bennett, First Chief, Soil Conservation Service, 1939*

I proudly present this 2006 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) annual report to you. We continue to make significant strides towards protecting our state's natural resources. Passage of the 2002 Farm Bill greatly increased funding for conservation programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Farmland Protection Program (FPP), the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

NRCS employees work in every county of the state. We are committed to helping our clients achieve their resource goals through a voluntary, incentive-based approach to land stewardship. This is the foundation of our conservation programs and each year's gains take us closer to our objective of maintaining a productive land in harmony with a quality environment See Pg 4.

# NORTH CAROLINA AG COST-SHARE PROGRAM



Cattle causing stream bank erosion and loss of water quality

Non-point source pollution has been identified by the NC Division of Water Quality as the primary source of degradation of freshwater rivers and streams in North Carolina. According to the North Carolina Non-point Source Assessment Report, agriculture is the largest source of stream-use impacts in the state. Of the 30% of stream miles, which are impacted negatively, agriculture is suspected of impacting approximately 65%. In addition, agriculture is suspected of being the primary source (60% of impacted acres) of NPS pollution in estuarine areas.

The approach taken in North Carolina for addressing agriculture's contribution to the non-point source water pollution problem is to primarily encourage voluntary participation by the agricultural community. This approach is supported by financial incentives, technical and educational assistance, research, and regulatory programs.

This program is intended to reduce the input of sediments, nutrients, animal wastes and pesticide (**agricultural non-point source pollution**) into the water-courses of our state.

By helping agricultural producers improve their level of on-farm management through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs). These include vegetative, structural or management systems that are used to improve the efficiency of farming operations by reducing potential pollutants into surface water. Popular BMPs offered include



Stream bank restoration with fencing and buffers



Cattle in Streams

strip cropping, animal waste management systems, poultry composters, stream crossings, spring developments, and cropland conversion. An agricultural producer participating in this program will be reimbursed by the State for 75% of the average cost of each BMP installed. The remaining 25% of the cost is the responsibility of the producer.

On May 5 2006 Supervisors Worth Killian, Ray Henderson, Gene Wilson ,Tom Bollinger, James Hardin and the staff of the District conducted spot-checks of three farms for compliance. The practices included cropland conversion, litter storage facility, well, fencing and watertanks. All were found in compliance with the guide lines of the

program.

A summary of results of the Program Year 2006 work toward improving water quality

- \$ 68,283.00 contracted
- 6 State approved conservation plans
- 100 acres cropland conversion
- 2 Stream Crossings
- 1 Stock Trail
- 9 Watering tanks
- 503 acres Affected
- 3857 ft of fence



Watering Tank for Livestock

Since October, 1989, \$1,279,356.00 has been allocated to Catawba County through the NCACSP. The planned BMP's save 8,978.83 tons per year of soil, and exclude more than 7,900 cattle and over 500 goats from free roam of the streams. More than 800,000 chickens were accounted for in poultry waste management

# 2006 NRCS Annual Report

## Catawba County, North Carolina

### Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

In FY-2006, the conservation partnership in Catawba County assisted over 400 land users, consultants, and units of government with solving natural resource problems.

PRS 6.13 Performance Summary - County Measures	Fiscal Year Goal	Total Progress	Progress Percent
C01 - CNMP Applied (No.)	3	3	100
C02 - CNMP Written (No.)	3	4	133
C03 - Conservation Plans for Cropland Written (Ac.)	300	1,548	516
C04 - Conservation Plans for Grazing Land Written (Ac.)	450	1,102	245
C05 - Grazing land with Conservation Applied to Protect the Resource Base (Ac.)	300	297	99
C08 - Non-federal Land Treated for Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Ac.)	50	23	47
C09 - Reduction in the Acreage of Cropland Soils Damaged by Erosion (Ac.)	250	335	134
C10 - Soil Erosion Reduced (Tons)	870	4,107	472
PRS 2.22 Summary Conservation Practices		Planned	Applied
Access Road (560) (ft)		3,618	1,464
Agrichemical Mixing Facility (702) (no)		1	
Animal Mortality Facility (316) (no)		2	
Composting Facility (317) (no)		1	1
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (100) (no)		5	3
Conservation Cover (327) (ac)		475	261
Conservation Crop Rotation (328) (ac)		728	402
Cover Crop (340) (ac)		10	
Critical Area Planting (342) (ac)		1	1
Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647) (ac)		258	49
Fence (382) (ft)		38,149	
Field Border (386) (ft)		3,900	
Firebreak (394) (ft)		29,253	
Forage Harvest Management (511) (ac)		94	98
Forest Stand Improvement (666) (ac)		140	50
Grade Stabilization Structure (410) (no)		3	
Heavy Use Area Protection (561) (ac)		21	3
Incinerator (769) (no)			1
Lined Waterway or Outlet (468) (ft)		40	
Long Term No. Till (778) (ac)		14	
Nutrient Management (590) (ac)		1,845	174
Pasture and Hay Planting (512) (ac)		169	156
Pest Management (595) (ac)		1,756	174
Pipeline (516) (ft)		16,808	1,050
Prescribed Burning (338) (ac)		61	
Prescribed Grazing (528) (ac)		680	203
Prescribed Grazing (528A) (ac)		401	51
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed (329) (ac)		13	13
Residue Management, No-Till/Strip Till (329A) (ac)		94	125
Residue Management, Seasonal (344) (ac)		677	264
Riparian Forest Buffer (391) (ac)		8	
Roof Runoff Structure (558) (no)		6	2
Structure for Water Control (587) (no)		1	1
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) (ac)		38	22
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490) (ac)		16	
Underground Outlet (620) (ft)		406	100
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) (ac)		148	13
Use Exclusion (472) (ac)			2
Waste Storage Facility (313) (no)		5	2
Waste Utilization (633) (ac)		22	14
Water Well (642) (no)		2	1
Watering Facility (614) (no)		26	3
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644) (ac)		20	10



**CRP** program planting of wildlife mix on Cropland



**Continuous CRP** buffer beside creek is planted in trees with fencing to protect



**CP33 UPLAND BIRD HABITAT BUFFER** program planting of wildlife mix on Cropland

## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible National goals. Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land. Through five to 10 year contracts, USDA may cost share up from 50 to 90 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices, depending upon eligibility.

North Carolina received \$ 14.2 million in EQIP funds for 2006. In Catawba County there were six applications for cost share assistance on practices ranging from dead poultry incinerators, poultry litter storage facilities, wells, water tanks, access roads, All eligible applications are scored and ranked after conservation plans and estimated cost share amounts was calculated. Five applications were selected for funding, allocating \$256,160 in cost share funds to active farms in Catawba County.

	EQIP Sign Ups	Applications Received	Applications Funded	Dollars Cost Shared
1	1997	18	7	\$21,446
2	1998	133	30	\$64,589
3	1999	19	19	\$82,743
4	2000	4	3	\$45,871
5	2001	7	1	\$1,458
6	2002-1	24	11	\$23,048
7	2002-2	3	3	\$54,770
8	2003	95	2	\$102,206
9	2004	4	4	\$98,731
10	2005	5	5	\$112,073
11	2006	6	5	\$256,160
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>\$863,095</b>

## **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**

Since 1998, there have been four WHIP program contracts developed in Catawba County. In 2002, two of those were cancelled by the landowner. The two remaining contracts provide habitat and habitat improvement to 12 acres and received cost sharing of \$18990.

## **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**

There are three Conservation Reserve Programs that land users can participate. Catawba County has had over the past 20 years about 4,005 acres enrolled in **CRP** and the **Continuous CRP** programs. About one half of the acres are planted to trees the other to grass. There are currently 58 contracts active, on 1312.9 acres, with annual payments totaling \$53,511. Over the ten year life of these 58 contracts this amounts to \$530,511. CRP removes highly erodible cropland from production and established either a vegetative cover or trees. The Continuous CRP program promotes the installation of buffers along streams in the watersheds by providing technical and cost-share assistance.

**The CP33 UPLAND BIRD HABITAT BUFFER** program began in 2005. This Conservation Reserve Program practice will benefit farmers, bobwhite quail, and other declining populations of grassland and brush land songbirds in North Carolina. This program pays farmers to establish habitat buffers around existing cropland. These strips (buffers) of volunteer vegetation on field edges that provide valuable structure, nesting and brood cover for bobwhite quail and other songbirds and other wildlife and food for birds in a farm landscape. These buffers also protect water quality and support integrated pest management.

## Envirothon

Four Middle schools from our County participated in the Envirothon in 2006. Two from Jacobs Fork Middle School (Jaguars 1 and Jaguars 2) and two from Grandview Middle school (The Eagles and Eagle Talons). The Eagles Envirothon team from Grandview Middle School placed first at the Area competition in North Wilkesboro and advanced to the NC State Envirothon Competition on April 28-29, 2006, at Cedarrock Park in Alamance County where they placed FIFTH in a field of 52 teams! Four High Schools teams from Catawba County participated in 2006. Two from Fred T. Foard the (Tigers I and Tigers II) and two from Newton Conover High (The Supernovas and Fifth Element). The Tigers II from Fred T. Foard placed Fourth in Area Competition on North Wilkesboro.



Left  
Larry Williams receives a plaque from the State President at the Fall meeting for the Fred T. Foard Jaguars fourth place finish in the State Spring 2005 competition.



Right  
Area II Envirothon  
North Wilkesboro



## Environmental Awareness Week

The Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District and the Catawba Cooperative Extension Service host 2 Environmental Awareness Week Field Days for the Fifth graders in Catawba County each year. Field Days give students the opportunity to learn conservation practices first hand from experts in their fields. The 2006 Field Days were held at Geitner Park in Hickory. Workshops included Recycling, Air Quality, Hybrid Vehicles, Water Quality, and Soil Conservation.

## Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

There are 10 RC&D areas covering 62 counties in North Carolina. Carolina Land & Lakes RC&D serves, Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Lincoln and Iredell counties in the foothills of Piedmont North Carolina. The office co-located to the Catawba County/ USDA Agricultural Services Center in Newton in September 2006. Catawba County RC&D Projects include

- Catawba Valley Paddle Trails: Construction of the second "Canoe Access" was completed at the new Newton Park on HWY 10 West in 2006. This Access at the junction of the Henry and Jacob Fork Rivers, will provide recreational, economic, and water quality benefits.
- 319 project application for Clarks Creek to address urban runoff in this impaired watershed re-worked to address Community Conservation needs.
- Lake Rhodhiss water quality monitoring to determine causes of impairment in the Catawba River Basin and creation of a basinwide plan.

## Meetings and Presentations

The fall area 2 meeting held in West Jefferson NC Oct, 2005 was attended by the staff of the District along with Worth Killian, James Hardin, Ray Henderson, and Tom Bollinger.

Larry Williams, Randy Willis and Kate Peragine attended a Community Conservation Program at Tanglewood Park

Randy and Larry presented a display at Riverfest in Geitner Park in Hickory on Sept. 16 2006.

March 29th the District staff did a Mini-Course on Government presentation .

Randy and Kate took part in the Area Envirothon in Wilkesboro on April 7th 2005.

Tom Bollinger attended the Southeast NACD meeting at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville NC

## Catawba Valley Paddle Trails Association

The District has been working with the Catawba Valley Paddle Trail Association on establishing access points for paddlers along the Henry Fork, Jacobs Fork, and South Fork rivers. It is our hope that the more people use these rivers for recreation, the more they will appreciate good water quality and strive to preserve it. For more information and to sign up for the email list: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/catawbavalleypaddlers/>



Paddling on the Jacob Fork River



New Canoe Access at the South Fork River below The Newton water intake



Canoe Take out on the Jacob Fork River at the Newton water intake



Catawba County  
Soil & Water Conservation District

PO Box 389  
Newton, NC 28658



## Mission Statement

The Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District's mission is to administer a comprehensive conservation program to protect and conserve our natural resources of Soil and Water by providing financial, educational and technical assistance to citizens of Catawba County and to establish new programs in concert with other appropriate agencies and organizations to meet changing needs.



<http://www.catawbacountync.gov/depts/soilwater/>

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