

DISTRICT TIMES

Rowan Soil and Water Conservation District



This issue:

From the Director	1
Board and Staff	2
History of SWCD	3
Featured Farm	4
Conservation Education	5
Community and Partners	6

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Rowansoilandwater

BY CHRIS SLOOP, DIRECTOR

Rowan County is growing and doing well economically these days despite the current state of the national economy and inflation rates. I think that most of us can attribute that fact to solid leadership in our county from our officials. Growth is important to support our local economy and provide jobs for our citizens, but it is also important for us as a collective, to recognize our established jobs and the traditional basis for our local economy, which is agriculture.

Rowan County secured a grant through the work of Rowan Cooperative Extension to contract Mount Olive University to assist us in writing a Working Ag Lands Plan. Over the last year and a half, The Working Agricultural Lands Plan Committee and Mount Olive University have worked hard to survey the citizens and compile the agricultural facts in the plan to create a very important document for our future. Every other county surrounding us has one of these documents adopted, and now we have a plan of our own.

The primary objective of the Rowan County Working Agricultural Lands Plan is to document the importance of agriculture to Rowan County's economy, and assess the opportunities, challenges, and issues that are currently facing the industry. I think that we have all heard the catch phrase, "No Farms...No Food." I have that bumper sticker affixed to my office door to remind myself and the patrons that enter my office of that daily. This fact is emphasized in the Executive Summary section of the document on page 6: "Farmland is an irreplaceable natural resource, and the farmers who are stewards of the resource impact the economy and quality of life for all county residents."

There are six recommendations contained in the plan. These six recommendations are, in a nutshell: to support measures to protect and promote working forest and farmland in the county, educate landowners on ways to keep land available for agricultural use, expand the Voluntary Ag Districts(VAD) and Enhanced Voluntary Ag Districts (EVAD), develop programs to assist county landowners in farm transition planning, promote agricultural awareness within the county, and expand and support youth agricultural education programs.

In February, the Board of Commissioners adopted the Working Ag Lands Plan. Support of the plan seems favorable by our citizens and our Commissioners. This plan will provide the facts supporting agriculture as a viable industry in Rowan County and provide future leaders with the framework to make good decision in light of our agriculture industry. I look forward to seeing how this plan will highlight and assist agriculture in the future.

Board and Staff



Supervisor Spotlight: Jim Summers

Forty-one years is a long time at one job, but that is how long Jim Summers worked for Iredell Soil and Water until his retirement in October 2021. As if that isn't dedication enough, Jim has been on the Rowan Soil and Water Conservation Districts' Board of Supervisors for 36 years. You might say Jim is dedicated to soil and water conservation. Some of his accomplishments include being a charter member of the NC Conservation District Employees Association where he served as president in 1996. He served in numerous other positions within that organization. Jim served as the Rowan SWCD Chair for 16 years. He also served as vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. He represented NC on two separate national farm bill committees and numerous other state and area committees for both the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.



At the end of January, Jim stepped down from his position on the Rowan SWCD Board of Supervisors. Jim says his favorite part of working with SWCD has been his interaction with landowners. That is also what he will miss the most. He has a great respect for the hard work they put in, and their care of the land. When asked what advice he would give to new soil and water employees Jim says to stay open-minded, show empathy, meet our resource needs, and make our programs meet the landowners' needs. Jim has enjoyed his time on the Rowan Board of Supervisors. "We have done meaningful things during my tenure, and have addressed our resource needs".

For Jim Summers, stepping down does not mean sitting around. He will be working for the Division of Soil and Water as an inspector for the Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program. He is already involved with the Disaster Relief Team with the Baptist Men's group at his church, and he plans on working at Scout Camp Barnhart during the summer. Jim is also an avid hunter and fisherman so there are a few trips in the works to pursue this passion. Most importantly, he will have more time with his wife, Joan of 41 years and their family.



Jim, you will be greatly missed by your soil and water family!

We are very pleased that our current board members, Bruce Rider and Cheryl Correll were re-elected to serve on our Board of Supervisors for four more years.

Both Cheryl and Bruce have years of practical and professional experience in the fields of agriculture, education, and conservation practices. We are fortunate to have them serve along with three other well-qualified and involved supervisors.



History of Soil Conservation

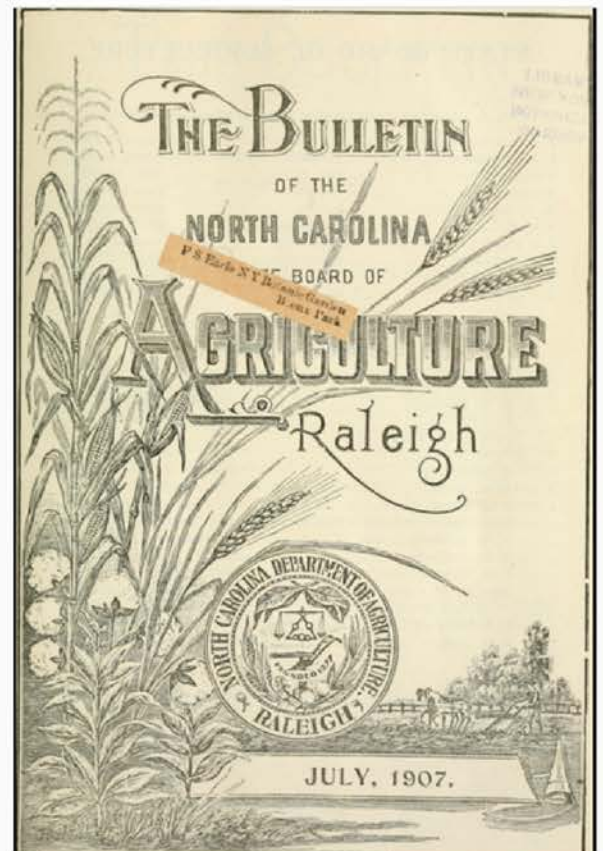
Time Line for Soil and Water Conservation

- 1862 The US Dept. of Agriculture began. Its first commissioner was Isaac Newton.
- 1877 The NC Dept. of Agriculture was established.
- 1898 The General Assembly began enacting laws to prevent water pollution.
- 1903 The Weeks Act was passed. This bill allowed the US Government to purchase threatened watersheds and timber stands.
- 1917 The Dept. of Agriculture and Natural Resources was established.
- 1930's President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal created agencies and programs designed to improve land quality.
- 1933 The Soil Erosion Service was established as part of the Dept. of the Interior.
- 1935 The Soil Conservation Act was signed which established the Soil Conservation Service within USDA. It is now called the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).
- 1937 The first Soil and Water Conservation District in the US was chartered in Anson County, NC.
- 1939 The Middle Yadkin Soil Conservation District was formed. This included Rowan, Davie, Davidson, Iredell and Cabarrus Counties.
- 1963 The Middle Yadkin Conservation District was divided into 5 districts to better serve its citizens. The Rowan Soil and Water Conservation District was formed from that division.



MISSION STATEMENT

Working in partnership with other agencies and organizations, the Rowan Soil and Water Conservation District's mission is to provide its citizens with the technical assistance and financial resources to carry out scientifically sound, sustainable practices that conserve the soil, water, and related resources of Rowan County. The education of our citizens in the wise use of natural resources will be a priority of this district.



Featured Farm: Bobby Waller Farms, LLC



Waller Farms, LLC was selected as Rowan Soil and Water Conservation District's 2022 Conservation Farm Family of the year. The district selects farms based on their excellent conservation practices and their community involvement.

Waller Farms started as a dairy farm in 1948. Like many dairy farms in Rowan County, the milking stopped in 2006, but the farm persevered and converted to a row crop operation, which now farms 2200 acres.



Pictured L to R:
Bobby and Sue Waller, Coty and Amanda Waller,
kids: Knox, Cole, and Klayton

Conservation Practices utilized on Waller's Farm

Grassed waterways help reduce erosion by slowing the flow of water through a field.

Cover crops are planted on all 2200 acres of the farm. This practice also helps prevent soil erosion, and adds nutrients to the soil.

No-till farming helps maintain the soil structure which has numerous benefits. Leaving corn stubble on the ground instead of tilling it in shades the soil which helps maintain moisture. The decomposing vegetation adds nutrients to the soil.

The Wallers use GPS to implement prescription fertility. This practice puts fertilizer right where the plants need it, reducing wasted fertilizer which saves money and reduces run-off.



Rowan County Soil and Water Conservation District encourages no-till farming by providing a Truax drill to rent. If you would like to learn more about the drill or reserve it for your property, Contact Chris Sloop



Conservation Education

Congratulations!

Each year the Rowan Soil and Water Conservation District participates in the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's contests. This year we hosted a poster contest and a public speaking contest. This year's theme was Water... The Cycle of Life.



John Tucker

**1st Place in Rowan SWCD Poster Contest
2nd Place in Area Poster Contest**



Guy Deal

**1st Place in Rowan SWCD Speech Contest
1st Place in Area Speech Contest**

Conservation Education in Rowan County



Landis Elementary



Essie Academy



West Rowan Elementary



Koontz Elementary

Southern Piedmont Envirothon

**March 28 & 29
Dan Nicholas Park**



The Southern Piedmont Envirothon will be held in Salisbury at Dan Nicholas Park. Middle and high school teams from 11 counties will come together to compete in the subjects of forestry, wildlife, aquatics, current environmental issues, and soils and land use. There are three teams representing Rowan County: The Outdoor Environmental Club's middle and high school teams and West Rowan Middle School team.

www.spenvirothon.org

Resource Conservation Workshop

**June 25 - 30
NC State University**

Rowan Soil and Water Conservation District offers a full scholarship to the Resource Conservation Workshop (RCW). This is a weeklong workshop for high school students that involves study and hands on participation in a wide range of conservation topics. Students are housed at NC State University. All high school students interested in a career in natural resources are encouraged to apply.

<https://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/educational/RCW.html>



Community and Partners



Waller family receiving their Conservation Farm Family of the Year award.

Conservation Banquet

In November, we partnered with Rowan County Cooperative Extension to host the Conservation Farm City Banquet. Our Conservation Farm Family of the Year, Bobby Waller Farms, LLC and our first place poster winner, Damon Lomax, were recognized. Board Supervisor, Cheryl Correll gave a presentation about the Rowan Soil and Water Conservation District and the many programs we have to offer. The Director of Rowan Cooperative Extension, Amy-Lynn Albertson, gave a presentation on the programs they have to offer with a special emphasis on 4H summer camps.

We would like to thank NC Farm Bureau for their support of this banquet.



Rowan Salisbury Farmers Market

IT'S TIME FOR FRESH PRODUCE

MID APRIL, SATURDAYS, 8-12
RAILWALK PAVILLION



VISIT THE SOIL AND WATER BOOTH AT THESE COMMUNITY EVENTS*

WE DIG SALISBURY
MARCH 25, 10-12
FREE NATIVE TREE GIVE-AWAY
TOWN CREEK PARK



Community Plant Swap
April 1, 10-12
Rowan Public Library East Branch
Registration required

HURLEY PARK
SPRING CELEBRATION
APRIL 2, 2-4
304 ANNADALE AVE.

EARTH DAY JAM
APRIL 22, 9-4
BELL TOWER GREEN

On the Calendar:

March 16	District Board Mtg.
March 17	NC Arbor Day
March 18	Global Recycling Day
March 22	National Ag Day
March 22	World Water Day
March 25	We Dig Salisbury- Tree Giveaway*
March 28-29	Southern Piedmont Envirothon
April 1	Community Plant Swap*
April 2	Hurley Park Spring Celebration*
April 20	District Board Meeting
April 22	Earth Day Jam*
April 28-29	NC Envirothon
April 30-May 7	NACD Stewardship Week
May 7	Teacher Appreciation Day
May 15	Endangered Species Day
May 18	District Board Meeting
May 20	World Bee Day