

# Transylvania County

## Soil & Water Conservation District



# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

# INTRODUCTION

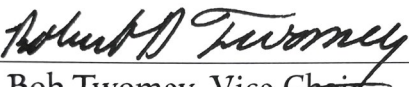
The following report reflects the activities and accomplishments of the Transylvania County Soil & Water Conservation District for fiscal year 2023-2024. These accomplishments were only achievable because of the strong relationships that the district has built over the years with the citizens of Transylvania County and our many partners in conservation.

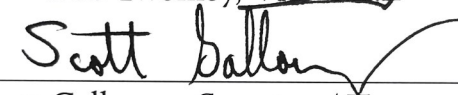
We hope that you will enjoy learning specifically about the many conservation improvements we have assisted our customers with during the past year. We are equally proud of the educational activities in our local schools and our outreach efforts through community conservation.

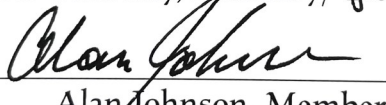
Thank you to the agencies who contributed to the Transylvania County Soil and Water Conservation District financially, and to those who gave of their time by helping us successfully implement all of our technical assistance and education programs.

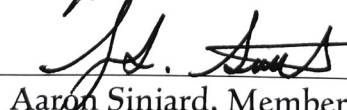
Thank you!  
The Transylvania SWCD Board of Supervisors

  
Dick Bragg, Chair

  
Bob Twomey, Vice Chair

  
Scott Galloway, Secretary/ Treasurer

  
Alan Johnson, Member

  
Aaron Siniard, Member



# DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS



**Allocated \$117,651 through the NC Ag Cost Share Program** for landowners to install water quality practices.

**Planned \$703,596 into 5 new contracts** for conservation BMPs on a total of **210 acres** in Transylvania County.



**Completed 18 debris removal projects** in the French Broad River with **\$90,000** in StRAP funds.

Rented the ag equipment to **13 landowners** for use on **149 acres**.



Partnered with Resource Institute to **stabilize over 7,950 feet of streambank** and **saved over 430 Tons of soil** from entering the French Broad River.



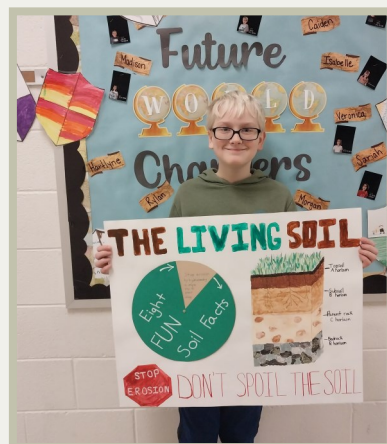
# DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

Board and staff members **received service awards** from the NC Association of SWCDs.



Gave **22 classroom presentations** and had **over 400 posters** for our contests.

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



**Conducted** our 51st annual conservation field days for 7th graders.

**Sponsored** a local high school student to attend the Resource Conservation Workshop.





# DISTRICT CONSERVATION

## NC AG COST SHARE PROGRAM

During fiscal year 2023-24, the District **allocated \$117,651 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
Fencing	16,780 ft.	4,290 ft.
Watering Tanks	9	3
Stream Crossings	3	-
Pipe	5,370	958
Heavy Use Area Protection	9	3
Well	2	2
Pasture Renovation	1 ac.	18 ac.
Concrete Feeding Pad	1	-

These BMPs affected **94 acres** and helped to save **124 Tons of soil** from polluting our streams.



# DISTRICT CONSERVATION

## SPECIAL NCACSP ALLOCATION

This fiscal year, the district **received \$100,000** from the NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation under a 2 year initiative known as the “**Upper French Broad River**” **BMP fund**. This special \$2 million cost share allocation fund was appropriated by the General Assembly to be used to provide cost share assistance to farmers in the Upper French Broad River watershed. Transylvania, Henderson, Buncombe, Madison and Haywood SWCDs can contract with producers for the installation of fencing, alternative livestock watering systems, pasture management, and other measures deemed appropriate by the local SWCD to keep livestock out of existing streams and watercourses that drain into the Upper French Broad River. The Transylvania district allocated these special funds for two cost share contracts in the French Broad River watershed. The district will allocate more of these funds in the 2025 program year of the NCACSP.



## 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 2024, the equipment was rented by **13 landowners, for a total of 23 days** for use on about **149 acres**. Rental fees/charges **brought in \$525** which was set aside in a reserve account for maintenance and repair of the equipment.





# 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. NRCS approved 5 sites for streambank stabilization with an estimated financial assistance of \$597,176.

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.

Construction began in early 2024 on Sweetwater Ridge and the J. Hightower sites. In April of 2024, the district requested an extension from NRCS so designs and construction could be completed on the remaining sites. At the Ridge Campground, Headwater Trout Farm and Lazy J Campground are set for completion by December of 2024.

EWP Estimated Assistance: \$597,176

StRAP Estimated Assistance: \$307,371

NC Dept. of Public Safety: \$75,000

**Total Financial Impact: \$979,547**





# DISTRICT CONSERVATION

## StRAP- COUNTY DEBRIS REMOVAL

The district used **\$90,000 from the NC Division of Agriculture and Consumer Services StRAP** program to remove debris from the French Broad River in the county. The district was able to **complete 18 projects** that **affected approximately 1,965 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



# NRCS CONSERVATION

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is an agency under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. One of the main Farm Bill programs that NRCS administers is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to assist landowners to install conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs) on agricultural land in production. EQIP supports the conservation priorities established for the Transylvania SWCD. BMPs are used to correct natural resources 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.

During FY24, NRCS advised and planned several projects to assist landowners to address specific resource concerns. Some of these included: stream restoration, water wells, livestock watering facilities, prescribed grazing, forest stand improvement, brush management, and several others practices. **NRCS awarded 5 contracts for FY 2024 totaling \$703,596.00 on 210 acres.**





## DWR—RI GRANTS

The District has partnered with Resource Institute, Inc. on several streambank restoration projects over the years. These streambank projects restore large sections of streambank and often involve multiple landowners. These large-scale projects could not be completed without a variety of funding sources including: the Natural Resources Conservation Service (RCPP funds), the NC Division of Water Resources, the NC Land and Water Fund and various private funding sources. These large projects have both a significant and positive impact on water quality in our streams. This year, the East Fork (Platt/Wickwire) project **impacted 1,490 feet of streambank** on the French Broad River and **saved 180 Tons** of sediment from getting into the river. Total funding brought into the county for this project was **\$556,703**. Also this year, the East Fork (Whitmire/Ganner) project **restored 1,080 feet of river bank** and **prevented 250 Tons** of soil from entering the stream. Construction will begin soon on the Middle Fork (Buford/Raines) project which will stabilize 1,040 feet of streambank and the Peter Weaver Creek project on 2,700 feet of a tributary of the French Broad River.

To date, the SWCD and RI have worked together on five (5) **stream projects that total 7,950 feet**. This includes approximately **\$1,328,545 federal dollars** and **\$1,206,273 state dollars**.



Left: Completed construction on one of the East Fork projects.



Right: Completed construction on one of the East Fork projects.



# CONSERVATION EDUCATION

## 3rd- 5th GRADE POSTER CONTESTS

Jo Ann McCall, Education Coordinator, presented the “Living Soil” program to **22 classrooms**. The presentation explained the importance of soil, some living things in soil, and ways to conserve it.

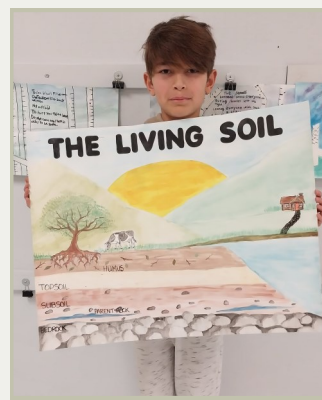
Over **400 posters** were completed for the contests.



3rd Grade 1st Place  
Gabriella Brown



4th Grade 1st Place  
Byron Gill



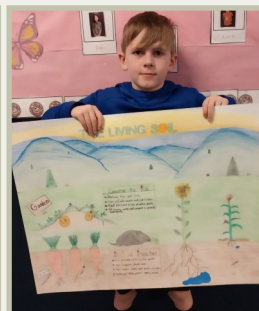
5th Grade 1st Place  
Gabrielle Sferrazza



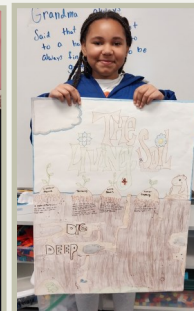
3rd Grade 2nd Place (tie)  
Paisley Fisher



3rd Grade 2nd Place (tie)  
Denver McNeely



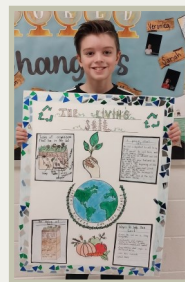
4th Grade 2nd Place  
Knox Ownbey



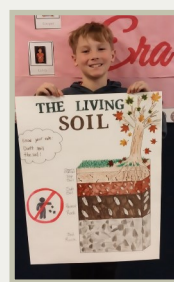
5th Grade 2nd Place  
MeMe Gossett



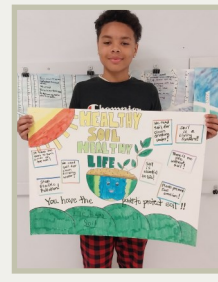
3rd Grade 3rd Place  
Boone Worley



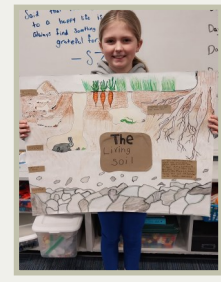
4th Grade 3rd Place  
(tie) Kaleb Campbell



4th Grade 3rd Place  
(tie) Bradley Warren



5th Grade 3rd Place  
(tie) Caleb Morrow



5th Grade 3rd Place  
(tie) Fallon Tritt

### Honorable Mention:

#### 3rd Grade:

Addison Christy  
Blake Dearbaugh  
Harper Fisher  
August Harbeck

Ava Owen

#### 4th Grade:

Chloe Burrows  
Hazel Carson

Mitzi Castro Gregorio

Jane Futrelle

Morgan Littleton

Nora Gray Snipes

Maddie Watts

Anuli Wilkes

#### 5th Grade:

Charlie Banner

Allie Mae Dodson

Jacqueline Gentis

Christiano Roberts

Eli Seefeldt

Leah Wilson



# CONSERVATION EDUCATION

## 7th GRADE CONSERVATION FIELD DAYS

**BREVARD MIDDLE SCHOOL 7th GRADE CONSERVATION FIELD DAY**  
**April 25, 2024– Sycamore Flats Picnic Area**

**155 Students**



**ROSMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL 7th GRADE CONSERVATION FIELD DAY**  
**May 2, 2024-Sycamore Flats Picnic Area**

**74 Students**





# SPECIAL RECOGNITION

## RCW

**Kaitlyn Owen**, a rising Senior at Brevard High School, attended the Resource Conservation Workshop in Raleigh in June. Kaitlyn enjoyed the experience at the workshop and has an interest in becoming a forest ranger after graduating high school. The District is proud to be represented by Kaitlyn at the RCW, and wishes her the best in her endeavors!



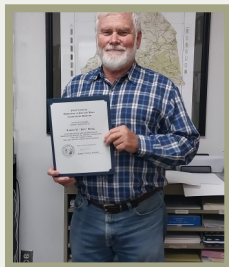
## DIVISION STAFF

The supervisors and staff of our District want to acknowledge the assistance received from **David Williams**, Director, **Julie Henshaw**, Deputy Director, **Kristina Fischer**, District Operations Section Chief, **Josh Vetter**, Environmental Services Sections Chief, **John Beck**, ACSP Manager, **Lisa Fine**— Environmental Specialist, **Rachel Smith**— Engineering Services Section Chief, **Matt Safford**, StRAP Manager, **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.



## SERVICE AWARDS & CERTIFICATION

Jeff Parker, District Director, received a 30 year service award during the Area 1 spring meeting. Jeff worked for Buncombe SWCD before coming to Transylvania SWCD.



Dick Bragg, Board Chair, also received a 20 year service award for his years on the Board of Supervisors.

Jo Ann McCall, Education Coordinator, completed the required credits for her Environmental Educator certification renewal. She has been a certified Environmental Educator for over 15 years.





# PROGRAMS SUMMARY

The following table captures the impact of the District's programs for FY 2023-2024 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 124 Tons of soil; Affected 94 acres
NRCS- EQIP	Conservation practices planned on 210 acres
Emergency Watershed Program	5 projects contracted; 2 completed; \$597,176 in EWP assistance
StRAP/ Debris Removal	18 projects completed; 1,965 linear feet of streambank stabilized
Resource Institute (RCPP)	2 projects completed; 2,570 linear feet of streambank stabilized; 430 tons of soil saved
Equipment Rental	\$525 revenue; Improvements on 149 acres
Education Programs	22 Classroom presentations- 400 contest participants 31 District winners- 1 Area 1- 1st Place winner 229 7th graders attended Conservation Field Days 1 Resource Conservation Workshop student sponsored

## 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) Dick Bragg- Chairman, Alan Johnson- Member, Scott Galloway- Secretary/Treasurer, Aaron Siniard, Member, Bob Twomey- Vice Chairman, Jo Ann McCall -Education Coordinator, Jeff Parker- District Director, Alec Yount- NRCS Soil Conservationist

