

Transylvania County Soil & Water Conservation District



ANNUAL REPORT

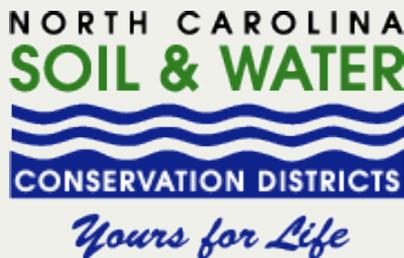
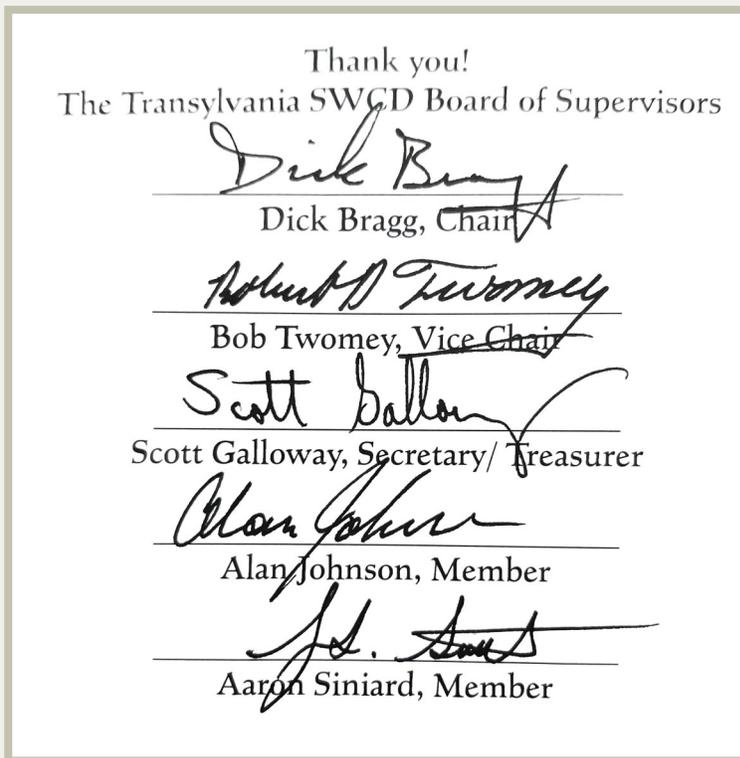
2024-2025

INTRODUCTION

The following report reflects the activities and accomplishments of the Transylvania County Soil & Water Conservation District for fiscal year 2024-2025. 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.



DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS



Allocated \$169,412 through the NC Ag Cost Share Program for landowners to install water quality practices.

Planned 4 new contracts for conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs) for a total of **\$92,980** Transylvania County.



Completed 5 Emergency Watershed Protection projects for Tropical Storm Fred response and have **begun Hurricane Helene response**.

Rented the ag equipment to **7 landowners** for use on **28 acres**.



Partnered with Resource Institute to **stabilize over 6,310 feet of streambank** and **save over 590 Tons of soil** from entering the French Broad River.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

District Board member and Education Coordinator **received service awards** from the NC Association of SWCDs and Transylvania County.



Gave 39 classroom presentations and had **over 860 entries** for our contests.

Had **7 Area** contest winners and **1 State** poster contest winner.



Conducted our 52nd annual conservation field days for 220 7th graders.

Said good bye to a dear colleague and friend.



DISTRICT CONSERVATION

NC AG COST SHARE PROGRAM

During fiscal year 2024-25, the District **allocated \$169,412 in cost share assistance funds** to landowners in Transylvania County for Best Management Practices (BMPs) that improve water quality. These funds were applied as follows:

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	Planned	Installed
Fencing	23,453 ft.	7,536 ft.
Watering Tanks	11	4
Stream Crossings	3	-
Pipe	7,400 ft.	2,699 ft.
Heavy Use Area Protection	11	4
Well	1	1
Ag. Road Stabilization	2,752 sq. yds.	-
Concrete Feeding Pad	1	-

These planned BMPs affected **63 acres** and helped to save **77 Tons of soil** from polluting our streams.



DISTRICT CONSERVATION

SPECIAL NCACSP ALLOCATION

This fiscal year, the district **received \$120,000** from the NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation under a 3 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 three cost share contracts in the French Broad River watershed. The district requested \$150,000 of these funds for the 2026 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 2025, the equipment was rented by **7 landowners, for a total of 11 days** for use on about **28 acres**. Rental fees/charges **brought in \$575** which was set aside in a reserve account for maintenance and repair of the equipment.



DISTRICT CONSERVATION

TROPICAL STORM FRED

On August 17th, 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 federal Emergency Watershed Protection (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. Construction on At the Ridge Campground, Headwater Trout Farm and Lazy J Campground was completed in September 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

HURRICANE HELENE

On September 27, 2024, Hurricane Helene hit Western NC and left a path of death and destruction in her wake. Transylvania County had severe damage from the storm including: historic flooding, landslides, streambank erosion and debris jams in waterways. The District has been coordinating with the county's Emergency Management Services Director to locate sites for cleanup. Contractors with the Army Corps of Engineers have been collecting personal and river debris and SWCD and NRCS staff have begun completing Field Data Reports for potential EWP funding.



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 FY25, 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 other practices. **NRCS obligated 4 contracts for FY 2025 totaling \$92,980.**



DWR—RI GRANTS

The District has partnered with Resource Institute, Inc. (RI) 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 NRCS Resource Conservation Partnership Program funds (RCPP), 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. Last year, two completed projects **impacted 2,570 feet of streambank** on the French Broad River and **saved 430 Tons** of sediment from getting into the river. Total funding brought into the county for these projects was **\$556,703**. Also this year, the Middle Fork project **restored 1,040 feet of river bank** and **prevented 160 Tons** of soil from entering the stream. Construction is currently underway on the Peter Weaver Creek project on **2,700 feet** of a tributary of the French Broad River and planting will be completed this winter. A new **4,500 feet** EQIP project on the West Fork is being planned for 2025-26.

To date, the SWCD and RI have worked together on **six (6) stream projects that total 12,450 feet**. These include approximately **\$1,957,500 of federal funds and \$1,654,273 of state funds** brought into the county.



Left: Completed construction on the Middle Fork project.



Right: Completed construction on the Middle Fork project.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

3rd- 5th GRADE POSTER CONTESTS

Jo Ann McCall, Education Coordinator, presented the “Wetlands are Wonderful” program to **39 classrooms**. The presentation explained the importance of wetlands and wetland plant species.

Over **860 entries** were completed for the contests.



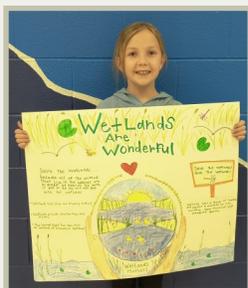
3rd Grade 1st Place
Noah Overton



4th Grade 1st Place
August Harbeck



5th Grade 1st Place
Ava Powell



3rd Grade 2nd Place
Claire Coan



4th Grade 2nd Place (tie)
Denver McNeely



4th Grade 2nd Place (tie)
Paisley Raines



5th Grade 2nd Place
Mitzzy Castro Gregorio



3rd Grade 3rd Place
Brailynn Birchfield



4th Grade 3rd Place (tie)
Sam Andrejko



4th Grade 3rd Place (tie)
Wiley Thompson



5th Grade 3rd Place (tie)
Ava Howard



5th Grade 3rd Place (tie)
Scarlett Shipman

Honorable Mention:

3rd Grade:

Ava Barrow
Kyara M. Velazquez
Luca Sgroi
Layla Wynn

4th Grade:

Kaliegah Aiken
Emma Fisher
Liam Goulet
Max Grisson
Gunner Owen
Nora Scalf

5th Grade:

Grant Hughey
Joey Love
Joanna Lopez-Rico
Kyleigh Starnes
Cece Williams

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONTESTS

Middle School contests include: 6th grade poster, 6th-8th grade essay, slide show and public speaking contests. The district had entries for all of the 6th and 8th grade contests.



6th Grade 1st Place- Poster
Tucker Willoughby



6th Grade 1st Place- Slide
Margaret Montgomery



6th Grade 1st Place- Essay
Willow Letter



6th Grade 1st Place-
Speech
Annie Wooldrige



8th Grade 1st Place-
Slide Show
Anna Parker



8th Grade 1st Place-
Speech
Manny Rivera



8th Grade 1st Place-
Essay
Clara Anderson



6th Grade 2nd Place
Slide Show
Klaira Keith



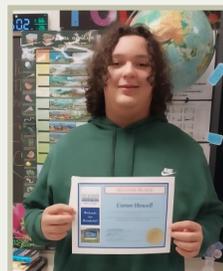
6th Grade 2nd Place
Essay
Quin Philyaw



6th Grade 2nd Place
Speech (tie)
Hailey Springston &
Charlotte Cook (not pictured)



8th Grade 2nd Place
Slide Show
Macyn Starr Wright



8th Grade 2nd Place
Essay
Coron Howell

2nd Place

6th Poster:

Lydia Owen

3rd Place

6th Poster:

Gabby Hunter

6th Slide Show:

Lillie Oliver

6th Essay:

Megan McCabe

Leah Pollack

8th Essay:

Ella Baker

Honorable

Mention:

6th Poster:

Isabella Gibbs

6th Slide Show:

Dana Buchanan

Eli Campbell

Finch Carlson

Lee (Woody) Sherrill

8th Essay:

Chelsea Borman

John Hunt

Cora Powell

Keillee Riddle

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

7th GRADE CONSERVATION FIELD DAYS

**BREVARD MIDDLE SCHOOL 7th GRADE CONSERVATION FIELD DAY
– Brevard Middle School– April 24, 2025**

161 Students



**ROSMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL 7th GRADE CONSERVATION FIELD DAY
-Sycamore Flats Picnic Area– May 1, 2025**

59 Students



SPECIAL RECOGNITION

SUPERVISOR & SERVICE AWARDS

Bob Twomey, Board Vice-Chair, received a **10 year service award** for his years on the Board of Supervisors. Prior to joining the Board, Bob was the NRCS District Conservationist for the District for 28 years.



Dick Bragg and Scott Galloway were **sworn in** as SWCD Supervisors on December 1st. Dick was reappointed and Scott was reelected to the Board in the November election.

Jo Ann McCall also received a **15 year service award** from Transylvania County.



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, **Matt Saford**, StRAP Manager, **Rachel Smith**– Engineering Services Section Chief, **Starr Silvis**, **Matthew Berens**, & **Sam Just**, Environmental Engineers, **Taryn Hendrickson**– Engineering Technician, and **Dalton Buchanan**- Soil Scientist- all with the Division of Soil and Water. We consider them valuable assets to our organization.



IN MEMORY



The District lost a great friend and colleague on April 26, 2025. Cayle Aldridge, Western Regional Coordinator with the NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. Before joining the Division, Cayle was a Soil Conservation Technician with NRCS and the District Director with Swain SWCD. Cayle leaves behind a legacy of soil conservation not only in the mountain region, but across the state. He will be greatly missed!

PROGRAMS SUMMARY

The following table captures the impact of the District’s programs for FY 2024-2025 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 77 Tons of soil; Affected 63 acres
NRCS- EQIP	Conservation practices planned in 4 contracts
Emergency Watershed Program (Tropical Storm Fred)	5 projects completed; \$597,176 in EWP assistance
Resource Institute (RCPP)	4 projects completed; 6,310 linear feet of streambank stabilized; 590 tons of soil saved; 4,500 linear feet planned for 2026
Equipment Rental	\$575 in revenue; improvements on 28 acres; assistance to 7 landowners
Education Programs	39 Classroom presentations- 860 contest participants 31 County winners- 1 Area 1st Place winner ; 6 Area 2nd place winners; 1 1st place State winner 220 7th graders attended Conservation Field Days

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