

**Durham Soil and Water Conservation District
(DSWCD)**

DSWCD Mission Statement

To conserve, enhance and promote the natural resources of Durham County by providing technical assistance, environmental education information and economic incentives to County citizens and by exhibiting a diversified program to meet its changing needs.

Below is a list of some of the programs I participates in with DSWCD..

Stream Restoration

The Grove Park Stream Restoration Project

The purpose of this project is as follows:

1. Conversion of 6,000 linear feet of unnamed tributaries into Little Lick Creek from an eroding, degraded channel to a natural, stable system with excellent aquatic habitat.
2. Reduction of sediment loading into Little Lick Creek and Falls Lake.
3. Establishment of vegetated riparian buffers along the unnamed tributaries and Little Lick Creek.
4. Partnering with Durham Public Schools, so students will grow riparian trees and install them.
5. DSWCD is also partnering with:
Grove Park Homeowners Association,
Piedmont Conservation Council,
Division of Water Resources of DEQ,
Triangle J Council of Government,
Raleigh Watershed Protection Program,
NC Land and Water Fund, and
The Land and Water Solutions.

The Agriculture Cost Share Assistance Program (ACSP)

The ACSP is a voluntary program for qualifying farmers and agricultural landowners to address natural resource concerns on the land. The program provides technical, educational, and financial assistance for the installation of conservation best management practices (BMPs) to address water quality issues found on the farm. The ACSPs are administered by the DSWCD. The DSWCD staff will be working closely with these producers over the next couple of years to provide technical assistance during the installation of the BMPs. Once completed, the staff will monitor the BMPs for 10 years to ensure their functionality for continued use.

NC Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP)

The AgWRAP is available to assist the Durham County agriculture community with water resource needs. Instead of being water quality driven like ACSP, the AgWRAP program is strictly water quantity basics to help address water resource concerns or needs on the farms.

Like the ACSP, once an AgWRAP contract has been signed and approved, the producer has 2 to 3 years to complete the installation of all BMPs.

Hurricane Agricultural Disaster Programs

The heavy rainfall and wind gusts caused by hurricanes produce land and property damage to the entire community. To help address the results of hurricane damage, several emergency programs were funded through Federal, State, and Private funding.

NC Division of Soil and Water awarded DSWCD \$22,500 to provide cost share assistance with three farm road repair contracts.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) received funding through FEMA to cost share assistance with stream debris removal.

Pasture Renovation and Cover crop seed initiative, which provided Durham County Farmers with 1,000 pounds of free seeds for reseeding pastures or winter cover on crop fields. The initiative was made possible with funding from the State Farm Bureaus around the country and Duke Energy.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

During FY2021, DSWCD received seven Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) applications, specifically for High Tunnels and only one High Tunnel System application was funded.

The remaining applications will stay in the system, and if the applicants are still interested when the next signup period come around their application will be considered again.

An additional contract was approved in the county under the Construction Stewardship program (CSP).

Grassland Conservation Initiative (GCI) for 12.9 acres in Durham. The Farm Service Agency determines who is eligible for this program and the number of eligible acres. The GCI allows landowners to graze hay or other activities only if the selected acres are kept in grass.

NRCS has another conservation program for those Agriculture Producers that are performing above and beyond in conservation for CSP. We received a Forestry application in 2021. If funded, this application will be the first CSP contract in the county.

Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP)

And

Bionomic Education Training Center (BETC)

The CCAP is a voluntary program that provides landowners with technical assistance and cost share reimbursement to install BMPs on urban and suburban land. On site consultations are provided to residents to address erosion, drainage, and water quality concerns along with evaluating those BMPs suitable for the site. The staff also host community outreach meetings with homeowner's associations and local groups to discuss water quality improvement. BMPs are available through CCAP, including rain gardens, grass swales, cisterns, critical area plantings, impervious surface conversion, and streambank stabilization. The primary mission of CCAP is to reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients from reaching our streams to improve water quality and aquatic habitat.

The BETC Program enhances middle and high school education by actively engaging student in hands-on implementation, activities, and research, as well as the development of critical thinking skills. The Program seeks to improve Science,

Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) literacy for students by providing teacher with curricula and training and advance responsible student behaviors toward the environment by engaging them in water quality projects (e.g., rain gardens) that address how to mitigate urban storm water runoff that threatens our water quality.

For CCAP and BETC the successes of the first year of a two-year grant from the Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund (SSCF). This grant involves a cooperative effort between the DSWCD, City of Durham, Rebuilding Together of the Triangle (RTT), Durham Public School, Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association (ECWA), and the NC Cooperative Extension Service. The primary goals of this cooperative effort are to address climate change by reducing stormwater runoff, streambank erosion, and flooding in low-income neighborhoods in the Ellerbe Creek Watershed of Durham and improving energy and efficiency in these same neighborhoods. An important secondary goal is to provide disadvantaged high school students with an opportunity to learn job skills in the field of green infrastructure.

The DSWCD and ECWA installed twenty-three stormwater BMPs at twelve locations (Ten single family homes and two community gardens). In addition, seven teachers and sixty students participated in the installation of these BMPs. RTT completed weatherization and moisture and mold remediation projects at ten homes with project at an additional fifteen homes currently in progress. DSWCD has already compiled a list of eighteen additional households interested in the next round of installations this year.

Watershed

Agriculture Compliance with Falls Lake Rules

The DSWCD participates with the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) to help meet the Falls Lake Rules requirements for Phase 1 mandate.

Agricultural Economic Development Grant

The purpose of the Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program is to offer cost share grants to assist famers and to promote Agriculture Development and Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers in schools. This Agricultural Economic Grant Program mimics the same outcome but is directed to support farms, new and beginning entrepreneurs, and to support agriculture education in schools.