

# FY2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Soil & Water...Yours for Life



<https://www.dconc.gov/swcd>





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## MISSION

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.

## VISION

To address all natural resources on every acre in Durham County in a way that will benefit the environment, wildlife, its people, and the natural resources themselves, plus produce an environmentally conscious group of citizens who will set a trend of conserving, enhancing and promoting our natural resource base.



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



As Director of the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District, I am proud to present our Annual Report for the 2024–2025 fiscal year. This report reflects our continued commitment to protecting Durham County’s natural resources through collaborative conservation, education, and innovation.

Over the past year, our team has worked diligently to advance ag economics, improve soil health and water quality, and support sustainable land use practices across the county. Through strategic partnerships with landowners, farmers, schools, and local agencies, we’ve implemented conservation programs that not only preserve our environment but also strengthen our community’s resilience in natural resources concerns and urban growth.

Highlights from this year’s report include:

- District celebrates 60 years as an independent district
- Cost Share Programs (ACSP, AgWRAP, CCAP, and ISIP)
- Ag Development
- Education & Outreach
- Stream Restoration & Stormwater Projects

These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our staff, the vision of our Board of Supervisors, and the unwavering support of our community and partners. As we look ahead, we remain focused on fostering a culture of stewardship and ensuring that Durham’s natural resources are protected for generations to come.

I invite you to explore the full Annual Report and join us in celebrating the progress we’ve made together. Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to conservation.

With gratitude,

Eddie Culberson  
Director  
Durham SWCD



# MEET OUR BOARD & STAFF



The District is a governmental subdivision of the State; a public body organized in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 139 of the General Statutes of North Carolina and is subject to the powers and restrictions as outlined in G. S. 139. Under this law, the District has the responsibility of conserving soil, water, and related natural resources within the District boundary. The District board is made up of five Supervisors (two appointed and three elected Supervisors).

## BOARD



**Talmage Layton**  
Chair  
(appointed)



**Mark Waller**  
Vice Chair  
(elected)



**Kenny Browning**  
Secretary/Treasurer  
(appointed)



**David Harris**  
Financial Officer  
(elected)



**Ja'Nell Henry**  
Supervisor  
(elected)

## STAFF



PICTURED: (Left to Right) Education & Outreach Coordinator, Elicia Senff; Natural Resources Coordinator, Dustin Brewer; Senior Administrative Officer, Lisa Marochak; Ag Development Coordinator, Sherry Scully; Agri Business & Environmental Services Manager, Jack Brown and Director, Eddie Culberson



**Grace Messinger**  
Executive Director for Piedmont  
Conservation Council (PCC)



**Haley Bock**  
Project Manager for Piedmont  
Conservation Council (PCC)



**Olivia Plant**  
Supervisory Soil Conservationist  
for Natural Resources  
Conservation Service (NRCS)



# DURHAM SWCD CELEBRATES 60 YEARS AS AN INDEPENDANT DISTRICT

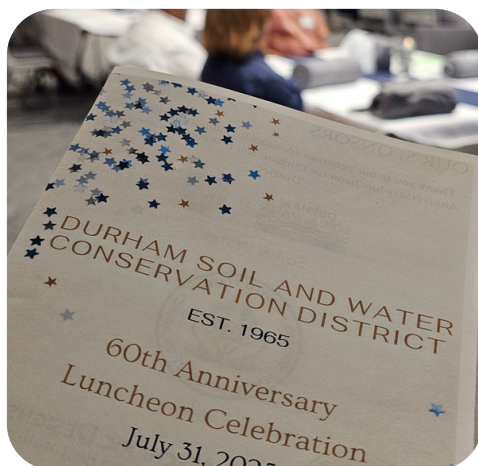


Sunday, February 2, 2025 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District becoming a stand-alone District in 1965. From March 22, 1937 to February 2, 1965, the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District was part of the multi-county Neuse River Soil Conservation District. However, in the 1960s, soil and water districts began to reflect county rather than watershed boundaries. On February 2, 1965, the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District became an independent district.

On Thursday, July 31st, the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District celebrated its 60th Anniversary as an independent District. The event took place at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Research Triangle Park (RTP) and brought together former board supervisors and staff, county government staff, elected officials, partner organizations, and local farmers.

The guest speakers reflected on the accomplishments of the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District and emphasized the importance of ongoing conservation efforts throughout Durham County and North Carolina. Our speakers included Tim Watkins from the EPA, who welcomed everyone to the campus; David Harris, a Board Supervisor with DSWCD; Claudia Hager, the Durham County Manager; Josh Myers, the Treasurer of NCASWCD and Board Supervisor for Guilford SWCD; Danielle Adams, a former DSWCD Board Supervisor; and our keynote speaker, Senator Natalie Murdock, who represents North Carolina's 20th District.

We were also joined by The Cougar Battalion from Goldsboro High School and our Durham Soil & Water YouthWorks interns. The Cougar Battalion commenced the event with the Presentation of Colors. They were joined by the YouthWorks interns for the Pledge of Allegiance.





# DURHAM SWCD CELEBRATES 60 YEARS AS AN INDEPENDANT DISTRICT

Throughout the last 60 years, the District has worked to meet the ever-changing needs of Durham County while still serving as the primary voice for agriculture in Durham. We look forward to continuing this work for the years to come.

The event was made possible thanks to our generous sponsors: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency , Land Mechanic Designs Inc., Water & Land Solutions, and Harris Teeter of Durham.





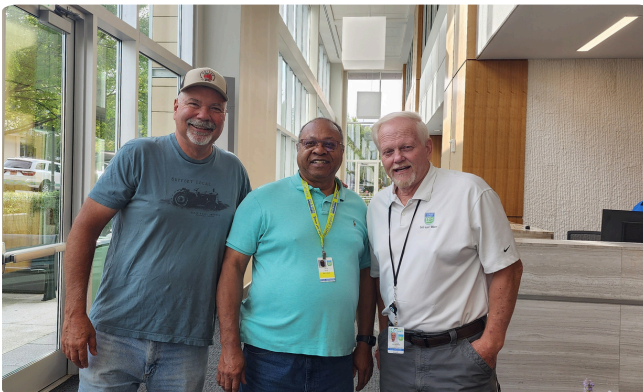
# DURHAM SWCD LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST



On Wednesday, September 24, 2024, Durham SWCD presented our FY23-24 Annual Report to the Durham County Board of County Commissioners, the County Manager, other local officials, and partner organizations. Through tabling booths and a presentation, Durham SWCD staff and our partners, Piedmont Conservation Council and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, shared information on our various programs and successes.

These successes included, but are certainly not limited to: over one million dollars of grant funding utilized to provide environmental benefits to Durham County residents, over 3,000 Durham County students engaged in environmental education programs, and almost 200 BMPs installed! You can read all about it in our 2023-2024 Annual Report. <https://www.dconc.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/41663>

Participants entered to win one of our door prizes and a raffle prize. The door prizes were donated by Durham SWCD and Layton Farm. The raffle prize, a selection of goods from our local farmers, was generously donated by Waller Family Farm, Vine and Branch Flower, Farm, Tailgate Farm, Bull City Farm, Durham Cooperative Extension, and Durham Farm Bureau.







# **COST SHARE PROGRAMS**

# AGRICULTURE COST SHARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



The Agriculture Cost Share Assistance Program (ACSP) is a voluntary program for qualifying farmers and agricultural landowners to address natural resource concerns on the land and prevent nonpoint source pollution from agricultural activities. 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 ACSP has been putting conservation on the ground across NC since the mid-1980's. Here in Durham County, it is administered by the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District.

This voluntary program helps landowners and producers improve natural resources (air, soil, plants, animals, and water) on their property by installing conservation BMPs. Participants can be reimbursed up to 75% of a predetermined average cost for each BMP installed. The applicant is responsible for the remaining 25% of the costs. In some situations, new or limited resource farmers can be eligible for up to 90% cost share.

The Durham County ACSP received \$60,446 from state appropriations for ACSP conservation practices (BMPs) in fiscal year 2025. Of the state appropriated funds, 100% were allocated to local Durham County producers/landowners for the following conservation BMPs: livestock exclusion fencing, cropland conversion to grass, waste application systems, grassed waterways, and agriculture pond sediment removal. The BMPs will mitigate or prevent future losses of nutrients and soil from the farms & nearby streams, thereby improving overall water quality in Durham County. Estimated reductions are expected once the BMPs are installed on about 70 acres while saving nitrogen, phosphorus, and soil all while improving water quality.

The District Staff will be working closely with their producers over the next couple of years to provide technical assistance during the installation of the BMPs. Once completed, the District will monitor the BMPs for 10 years to ensure their function and continued use. On April 29, 2025 three supervisors and four district staff visited six ACSP sites. During the spot check, it was observed that all six contracts were in compliance.



*Automatic Horse Waterers*



*Exclusion Fence*



*Manure Spreader  
FY25 ACSP Spot Check*



# AGRICULTURAL WATER RESOURCES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



*Micro-Irrigation  
FY25 AgWRAP Spot Check*



*Water Well*

Established in 2012, the NC Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP) is available to assist the Durham County agricultural community with water resource needs. Instead of being water quality driven like ACSP, the AgWRAP program is strictly water quantity based to help address water resource concerns on farms. AgWRAP is intended to identify opportunities to increase water use efficiency, availability, and storage, and to implement best management practices (BMPs) to conserve and protect water resources for agricultural purposes.

The state legislated appropriation for AgWRAP is considerably smaller than ACSP. Therefore, the District allocation is much smaller than the ACSP. In FY 2025, the Durham District received \$12,676 that was used for a water well and supplemental funding for a previous year's water well. One water well was allocated to a new/beginning farmer to provide a clean and efficient water source for their produce. The other supplemental funding was allocated to new/beginning farmer to provide an adequate amount of water for their vegetable and live stock production as well as their future planned outdoor classroom.

Similar to the NC ACSP, once an AgWRAP contract has been signed and approved, the producer has two to three years to complete the installation of all BMPs.

On April 29, 2025, three supervisors and four district staff visited two AgWRAP sites. During the spot check it was observed that both contracts were still in compliance.





# COMMUNITY CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP) is a voluntary program that provides landowners with technical assistance and cost share reimbursement to install best management practices (BMPs) on urban and suburban land. On-site consultations are provided to residents to evaluate erosion, drainage, and water quality concerns. Suitable BMPs are determined upon evaluation. Staff also host community outreach meetings with Homeowners Associations and local community groups to discuss water quality improvement methods.

BMPs available through CCAP include rain gardens, grassed 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 reaching our streams to improve water quality and aquatic habitat.

Durham SWCD continued utilizing a grant worth \$90,000 from City of Durham and \$94,000 from EPA. The purpose of these funds is to implement BMPs. During FY25, Durham Soil and Water staff were pleased to conduct outreach efforts and site visits to encumber and expend these funds. The majority of the BMPs installed were in designated priority areas in Durham. This program is funded through partnerships with the State, City of Durham and other grant entities that are vital to the success of the CCAP in Durham!

## FY25 CCAP Measurable Achievements

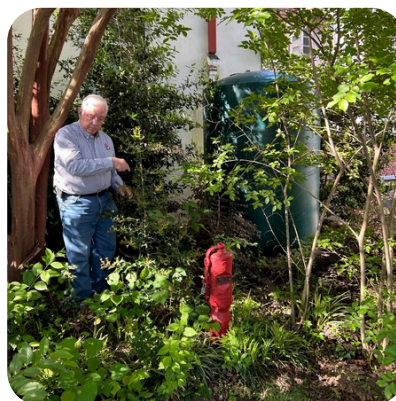
Technical Assistance	174
Applications Received	20
BMPs Installed	31
Tons of Soil Saved (annually)	585
Pounds of Phosphorus removed (annually)	5.59
Pounds of Nitrogen removed (annually)	15.73
Cost Share Reimbursed	\$43,474



*Downspout disconnect*



*Cistern*



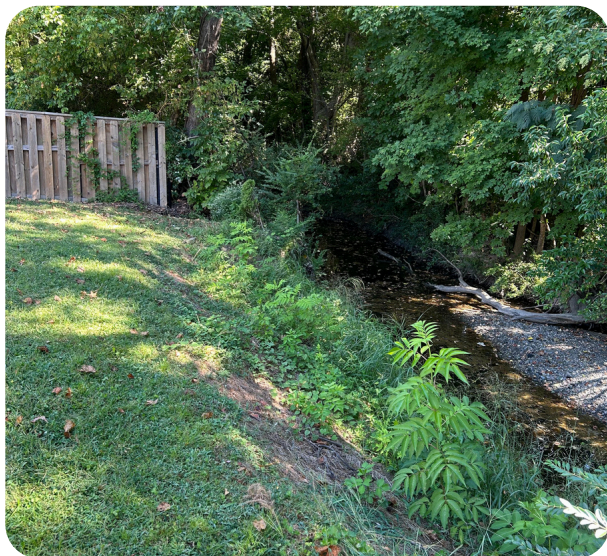
*FY2025 Spot Check*



*Rain garden*



# IMPAIRED STREAM IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



*Streambank Stabilization*



*SEEDS Community Garden*



*Riparian buffer*

The Impaired Stream Improvement Program (ISIP) seeks to implement conservation best management practices (BMPs) on impaired streams in low-income areas. The selected projects target stream sites where the amount of sediment and nutrients entering the stream can be reduced using BMPs. These practices include streambank stabilization, critical area planting, rain gardens, riparian buffers, etc.

ISIP provides landowners who self-certify as low income with 100% cost-share for BMP installations on their property in cases where water quality concerns are identified. A "Limited Resource Self-Certification" form has been created and updated for use with this program based on the FY 2024 Income Limits for Durham-Chapel Hill, NC HUD Metro FMR Area (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development).

During fiscal year 2025, the district used the funding to repair three eroded streambanks, one riparian buffer planting, and to install a large garden irrigation system utilizing collected rainwater. The contracts have a 5-year maintenance requirement that the landowners must abide by for all installed practices, beginning once construction is completed.

The Durham District contracted K&E Environmental and CFB Contracting. Both are certified, insured environmental contractors with years of experience implementing the BMPs designed by Durham SWCD staff for a total cost of \$50,000.





# AG DEVELOPMENT



# AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM



The Durham County Board of County Commissioners approved an allocation for the Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program of \$250,000 for the fiscal year 2025. This program's purpose is to offer cost share grants to assist farmers and nonprofits in their agricultural endeavors and to promote Agriculture Development and Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers in schools.

The Agricultural Economic Development Grant Subcommittee administers this grant program. This committee is made up of nine (9) members that manage the program and evaluate each application. These nine members represent multiple agencies that assist the farming community as well as members of local non-profit advisory boards.



School Raised Beds

Supplies to assist  
with growing  
plants

Mobile  
chicken  
coop



Wildlife Exclusion from  
garden and orchard



School  
Tower garden



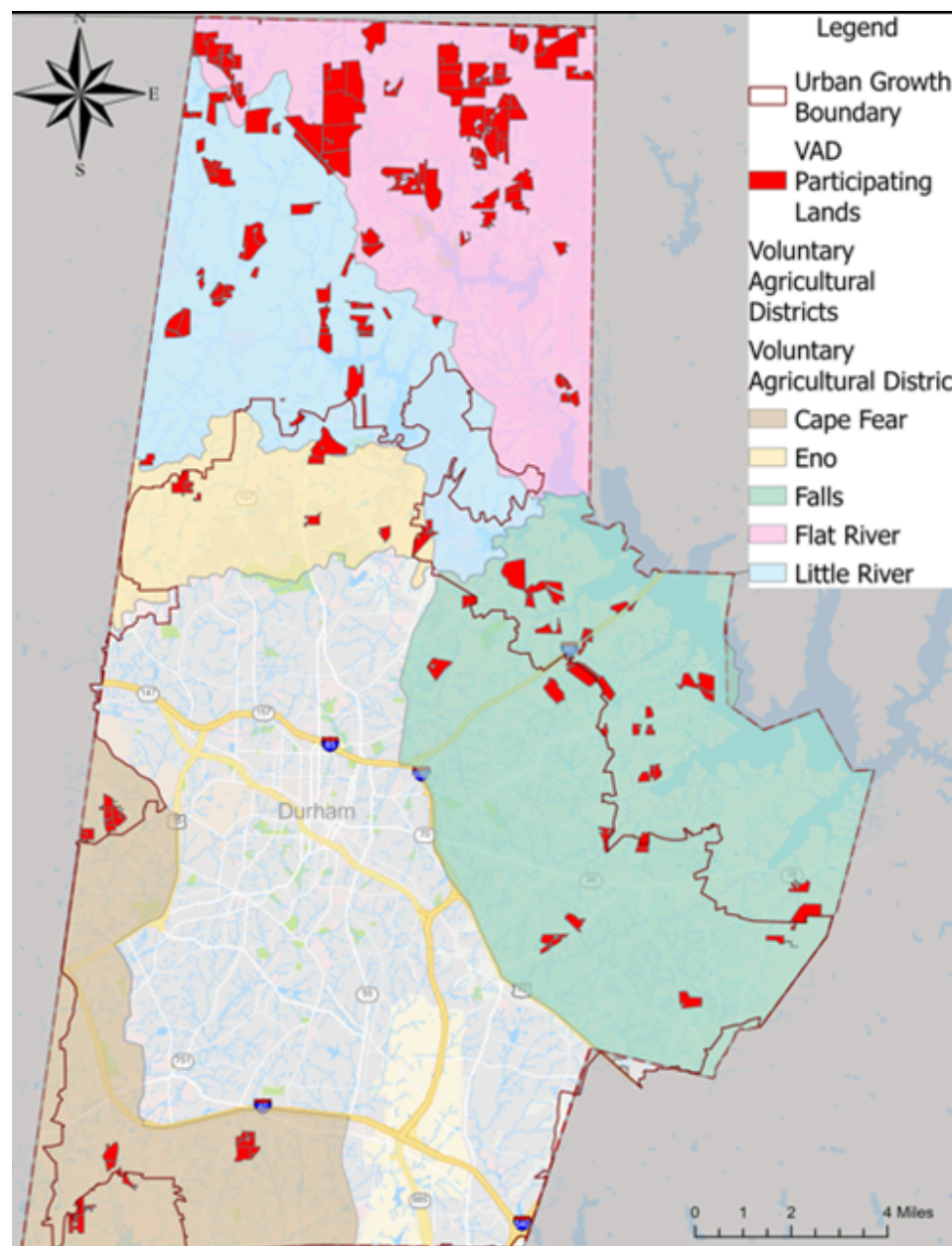


# VOLUNTARY AG DISTRICT PROGRAM

Working farms have an important, positive impact on the economy and culture of our region. In 2000, Durham implemented the Voluntary Ag District (VAD) program. VADs, certified by the Farmland Protection Board and administered by the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District, help ensure the voluntary preservation of the land and the protection of farms.

Interested landowners sign a non-binding contract committing to prohibit non-farm use of the land for 10 years. VADs are recognized with a roadside sign to notify passersby that there may be odor, dust or noise experienced in the area. These signs are a way that farmers can share that farms are here to stay.

This year, VADs were added to the county's GIS data. This layer provides valuable information to Durham City-County planners and decision makers.



**110 VAD participants**

**251 land parcels**

**9,101.37 acres**



**Thank you to the Southern School of Energy and Sustainability students who helped build the frames for the VAD signs. The FPAB celebrated the students with an end-of-year pizza party.**



# FARMLAND PROTECTION ADVISORY BOARD HOSTS BREAKFASTS

Each winter, the Farmland Protection Advisory Board (FPAB) hosts breakfasts offering information for farmers and landowners on various topics. This year, 65 attendees heard from three presenters in two sessions on topics useful to owning and operating a farm.

On Thursday, December 12th, 2024, farmers and landowners met at Durham Farm Bureau to hear a presentation from a Farm Bureau agent and underwriter on farm insurance. This was a great conversation that brought many questions and laughs. During the second breakfast on Thursday, January 16th, 2024, landowners heard from Annette Hiatt, Senior Attorney with the Land Loss Project for a presentation on farm law.



January 16th breakfast



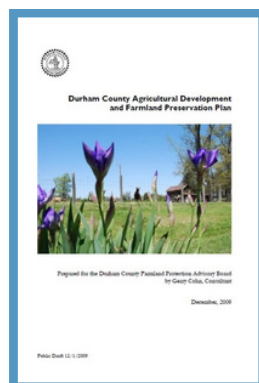
December 12th breakfast



## DURHAM COUNTY FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN UPDATE



Work made possible by a grant from the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund is underway to complete a revision of the 2009 Farmland Protection Plan. Durham SWCD has assisted a contractor, Foothills Regional Commission, in engaging farmers and stakeholders through interviews, surveys, and a community engagement event to learn more about the current status and future needs of Durham's agriculture community. This knowledge will help shape the Farmland Protection Plan update which will be made available in the spring of 2026.



# FARMLAND PROTECTION ADVISORY BOARD PROVIDES SUPPLIES TO SCHOOLS

The FPAB uses some of their funds each year to donate supplies for projects in the community that support ag development in schools. This year, the board supported four schools with requested items.

**1) Riverside High School class**, under the guidance of teacher, Jenny Bailey, purchased pots, growing medium, and seeds to grow plants for a spring plant sale. The students gained hands-on experience learning how to plant seeds, care for plants, and market the plants at a successful plant sale. The students raised money to continue their work in the greenhouse growing more plants.

**2) Jordan High School FFA** participates in the Central Piedmont Livestock Show. Students care for their livestock for months before preparing the animals to go to the show. The club requested clippers to help with animal care necessary for the livestock show.

**3) RN Harris Elementary** requested the purchase of items that would allow students to raise plants from seed in pots that could be taken home to be cared for. Many students do not have opportunities to grow plants outside of these school experiences.

**4) Northern High School** Horticulture teacher purchased bare root fruit trees with FPAB donation. These trees have been utilized in the expansion of their current garden and greenhouse growing areas and will offer new learning experiences.



Jordan High School FFA



Riverside High School



RN Harris Elementary



Northern High School





# **EDUCATION & OUTREACH**



# 2024 FARMER APPRECIATION DINNER

Each year, Durham Soil and Water Conservation District hosts a Farmer Appreciation Dinner to thank farmers for all their hard work in the county. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Farmer Appreciation Dinner was held at Coffey Ground Ranch in Bahama, North Carolina, with a total of 137 guests in attendance.

Each year Durham SWCD recognizes a Farm Family of the Year and a Farm Heritage Hall of Fame inductee at the dinner. The Farm Heritage Hall of Fame recognizes those individuals of the past or present who, through agriculture, have made or continue to make our county and state a better place to live and work. This year, the Farm Heritage Hall of Fame Committee inducted Mr. Eddie Culberson for his dedication, agricultural impact, and community involvement in Durham County for over 30 years.

The Farm Heritage Hall of Fame Committee is made up of farmers, SWCD employees, Farm Bureau members, and a Farm Service Agency employee.



Pictured above: 2024 Durham Heritage Hall of Fame Inductee





# 2024 FARMER APPRECIATION DINNER

Each year, Durham SWCD selects a Farm Family of the Year within the county that shows great conservation techniques. This year, "R" Farms from the Redwood Community was chosen as our Farm Family of the Year in Durham County. "R" Farms is owned by Larry Ricks and operated by both him and his nephew, Chaz Clayton. They have a great operation going on with a successful future ahead.

We try to choose a farm that practices great conservation methods, educates our communities through events and programs, and exemplifies great stewardship. "R" Farms has practiced no-till methods for many years along with installing grassed waterways, field borders, rooftop runoff management, ag pond sediment removal and other practices that help reduce soil erosion and build soil health! The farm produces hay, a mixed variety of produce (sweet potatoes, corn, squash, zucchini, cucumbers, onions, tomatoes and more), and timber totaling over 300 acres. Additionally, they have 10 Black Angus cattle and plant annual food plots for wildlife. They have participated in various programs through Durham SWCD and have planned more for the future! Soil health and water quality, along with other conservation methods, are Mr. Ricks' top priorities on his farm.



2024 Durham SWCD Farm Family of the Year



Grassed Waterway



Gutters



Greenhouse



# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

## Field Days

Durham SWCD's 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Field Days provide DPS students with interactive lessons presented by resource professionals. These lessons cover topics such as forestry, wildlife, and water resources. Throughout FY25, our educational field days engaged 516 students across five different schools.

Our partners for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Field Days include City of Durham Stormwater, U.S. EPA, NC Forest Service, and City of Durham Water Management.



## Classroom Programs

During FY25, Durham SWCD led a variety of educational programs at DPS schools and preschools. Lesson topics included soil, population dynamics, and agriculture. We also hosted a Big Sweep clean-up at E.K. Powe and led the K-2nd grade classes at R.N. Harris through a stream study for Creek Week.



## The Book Planter

Through a generous donation from Durham Farm Bureau, we introduced a new program: The Book Planter. The Book Planter is an initiative led by NC Farm Bureau to provide educators with agriculture-related books and lesson plans. Each month, we donate 5 copies of the monthly book pick to Durham County K-5 educators. Since Fall 2024, we have provided 60 books to Durham County teachers.





# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

## Civic Engagement & Booths

In FY25, Durham SWCD staff tabled at several civic engagement events including DPS Science Nights, Durham Library programs, Creek Week, DPS Kick Off Events, the Haw River Learning Celebration, the NC State Fair, and the Spring Soils Festival.



## Trinity School Service Project

Durham SWCD partnered with Orange SWCD and Durham County Open Space to establish a school service project with Trinity School at Hollow Rock Nature Preserve. The project will engage 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in environmental stewardship while providing real-world connections to their earth science curriculum. The service project is slated to begin in the 2025–2026 school year. It's designed to be an ongoing project that will engage 6<sup>th</sup> grade students for years to come.

## Adult Education

In FY25, Durham SWCD hosted a multi-part seminar on sustainable landscaping practices for Durham County General Services. The training included classes on soil health, native plants, and gardening for pollinators.

Additionally, we provided educational opportunities to the public through civic events, the annual Tri-County Pasture Field Day, the annual Durham–Orange Pond Clinic, Environmental Education workshops, and more. Over 3,100 adults participated in our educational programming.





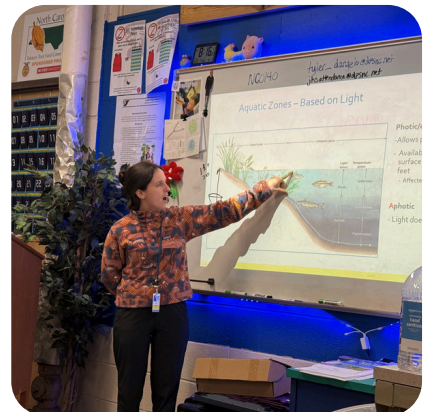
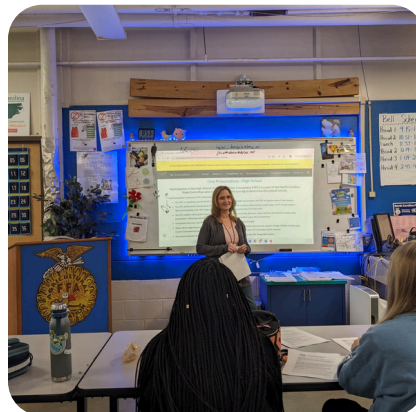
# ENVIROTHON

The Area IV Envirothon Competition was held on March 20th at Owen's Recreational Park. Teams from 11 counties are eligible to compete: Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Johnston, Nash, Vance, Warren, and Wilson. Fifteen middle school teams and 35 high school teams competed at the 2025 competition. Of these, four high school teams represented Durham County.

Three of the Durham County teams placed and went on to compete at the NC Envirothon Competition. The NC Envirothon was held May 2-3rd, and 50 high school teams traveled from all over NC to compete. Scores for the Durham County teams are in the table below.

Durham SWCD staff volunteered at the Area IV and Statewide event, and they helped train the students on the subject material.

<p><b>Jubilant Junipers</b> NC School of Science and Math</p> <p>Area IV: 3<sup>rd</sup> Place NC: 7<sup>th</sup> Place</p>	<p><b>Branching out Bunch</b> NC School of Science and Math</p> <p>Area IV: 4th Place NC: 14th Place</p>	<p><b>Falcon FFA</b> Jordan High School</p> <p>Area IV: 1st Place FFA Team NC: 2nd Place FFA Team</p>
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# RESOURCE CONSERVATION WORKSHOP



**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**



This year, the Durham SWCD Board sponsored Adriel Hernandez, a junior at Jordan High School, to attend the Resource Conservation Workshop (RCW). Corinne Paul, a sophomore at Jordan High School, was also selected to attend. She received a scholarship through NC State University to cover attendance.

The RCW is a weeklong camp held at NC State University for students interested in conservation and natural resources. From June 15–20<sup>th</sup>, Adriel and Corinne participated in field studies, tours, and hands-on sessions led by resource professionals. Students who attend the RCW are eligible to receive awards and scholarships at the end of the workshop. Adriel Hernandez received the first ever Billy and Regina Kilpatrick Scholarship to be used upon graduation of high school at an institution of higher learning.



Adriel Hernandez with  
Regina and Billy Kilpatrick



Pictured left to right: Tyler D'Angelo (Jordan High FFA Teacher, Adriel Hernandez, Corinne Paul, and Lisa Marochak (Durham SWCD staff)







# 2025 CONSERVATION AWARDS CELEBRATION



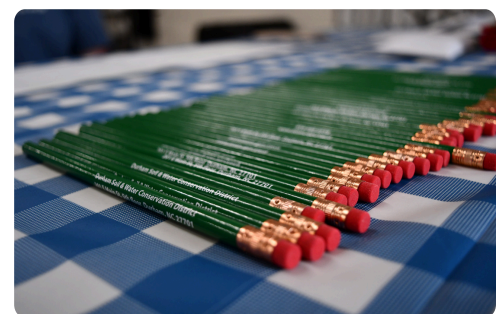
The Annual Conservation Awards Celebration was held on May 20<sup>th</sup> at Redwood Ruritan Club. We recognized the winners of the 2025 Conservation Contests and K-2 Bookmark Contest, the Conservation Education Secondary Teacher of the Year, and our Durham County Envirothon Teams.

The 2024-2025 theme for the Conservation Contests was “Wetlands are Wonderful” and the theme for the Bookmark Contests was “Creek Critters.” We received almost 700 entries from Durham County students! Winners of the Conservation Contests receive a certificate, a yard sign, and a cash prize. The winning entries for the Conservation Contests are submitted to the regional competition where they have a chance to win additional prizes. Notably, four entries submitted by Durham County students placed second at the Area competition!

We recognized Hannah Foust, an Agriculture teacher from Jordan High School, with the Conservation Education Secondary Teacher of the Year Award. This title is awarded to teachers who promote conservation education in the classroom.



BOOKMARK (K-2 <sup>ND</sup> ) THEME: CREEK CRITTERS		
<b>KINDERGARTEN</b> <u>1<sup>st</sup> Place</u> Veronica Bradley (R.N. Harris) <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</u> Esa Braswell (R.N. Harris) <u>Honorable Mention</u> Charles Xayavong (Easley Elementary)	<b>FIRST GRADE</b> <u>1<sup>st</sup> Place</u> Sylvie Stuart (Carolina Friends) <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</u> Mila Herron (Homeschool) <u>Honorable Mention</u> Angelice Kirk (R.N. Harris)	<b>SECOND GRADE</b> <u>1<sup>st</sup> Place</u> Ava Bridges (R.N. Harris) <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</u> Soraya Carella (EK Powe Elementary) <u>Honorable Mention</u> Thomas Morrell (Morehead Montessori) Anjali Voora (Durham Academy)
POSTER (3 <sup>RD</sup> -5 <sup>TH</sup> ) THEME: WETLANDS ARE WONDERFUL!		
<b>THIRD GRADE</b> <u>1<sup>st</sup> Place</u> Haniya Zaynab Cheema (Holt Elementary) <i>*2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner for Area 4</i> <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</u> Lyric Freeman (Holt Elementary)	<b>FOURTH GRADE</b> <u>1<sup>st</sup> Place</u> Kiran Voora (Durham Academy) <i>*2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner for Area 4</i> <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</u> Henry Strong (Holt Elementary) <u>Honorable Mention</u> Mia Seabrook (Mangum Elementary)	<b>FIFTH GRADE</b> <u>1<sup>st</sup> Place</u> Luna Gomez (Holt Elementary) <i>*2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner for Area 4</i> <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</u> Ruby Jones (E.K. Powe) <u>Honorable Mention</u> Kelly Edwards (Bethesda Elementary) Priscilla Sears (Mangum Elementary)
ESSAY (6 <sup>TH</sup> ) THEME: WETLANDS ARE WONDERFUL!		
<b>SIXTH GRADE</b> <u>1<sup>st</sup> Place</u> Scarlett Lee (Voyager Academy Middle) <i>*2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner for Area 4</i>		<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</u> Ella Ritter (Voyager Academy Middle)





## SOIL TUNNEL TENT

In FY25, Durham SWCD received a soil tunnel tent courtesy of the NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation. The tent is available for Area 4 districts to utilize at educational events. Since its acquisition, the tent has been displayed at school programs, Envirothon trainings, and civic events.



## SAMMY SOIL (MASCOT)

Sammy Soil is Durham SWCD's mascot. During FY25, our mascot made several appearances around Durham County at booths, in classrooms, and during the 2025 Awards Celebration.



## 2024 TRI-COUNTY PASTURE FIELD DAY

This year Orange County hosted the 5th Annual Tri-County Livestock and Pasture Field Day with help from Durham and Person County. This event was held on September 26th, 2024, at Gates Farm in Hurdle Mills, NC with 72 people in attendance. This event is an opportunity for agriculture and livestock professionals from across the Piedmont to learn about pasture and livestock management techniques.

The topics this year consisted of Managing Fire Ants and Flies in Pastures, Weed Identification and Management in Pastures, Fencing Installation Demonstration by Stay-Tuff, and Livestock Handling Facility Demonstration by Priefert.

There were many sponsors including Durham, Orange, and Person Soil and Water Conservation Districts, NC Cooperative Extension, Durham Farm Bureau, Orange Farm Bureau, Person Farm Bureau, Carolina Farm Credit, Barenbrug, Southeast AgriSeeds, Southern States Cooperative, Tractor Supply of Hillsborough, Pasture Management Systems Inc., FarmPLUS Insurance Services, Priefert, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Datamars Livestock, MadWood, and Stay Tuff.





# 2025 ANNUAL DURHAM AND ORANGE COUNTY POND CLINIC

On May 14th, the Durham and Orange Soil and Water Conservation Districts held their annual pond clinic at the Cornwallis Farm in Durham. The day started off rainy, but it ended with beautiful sunshine. We kicked the event off with a youth fishing tournament which was enjoyed by all that participated. During this event, citizens were able to gain knowledge on topics such as pond construction, maintenance, fish production, and wildlife associated with ponds. There were 42 people that participated at this year's event. Most participants owned a pond and, for the most part, were interested in managing ponds for weed control and fish production. Durham & Orange Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Foster Lake and Pond Management, Cornwallis Farm, Durham County Farm Bureau, Summit Engineering & Design, Walmart in Hillsborough, and AgSouth Farm Credit were the event's sponsors. The event concluded with a delicious lunch that was catered by the Northern High School Culinary Arts Department.



1<sup>st</sup> place Fishing Tournament



2nd place Fishing Tournament



## POND REQUESTS

Each year the Soil and Water Department looks at many existing ponds in the county. Citizen's pond requests can be anything from a leaking dam, a weed problem, or problems from wildlife.. This year the department assisted 73 residents in the management of their reservoirs. The department also looked at several new pond sites during the year. Older ponds eventually fill in with sediment and need to be cleaned out. This is another service the department offers the landowners in the county through the Ag Cost Share Program.



# NC FOUNDATION FOR SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION



During FY 2025, Durham SWCD received funding from the NC Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation and the North Carolina ADFP Trust Fund to purchase a drone and a ant bait broadcaster.

The drone has been purchased, and staff is in the process of getting trained so they can take the certification test. The drone will be used to help monitor Durham SWCD Stream Restoration and Stormwater Projects, monitor Best Management Practices and also assist with easement monitoring.



In FY2025, the Durham Soil and Water Conservation District purchased a Herd Sure-Feed Spreader. This Advancing Soil Health by Increasing District Equipment Rental Program received support from the NCDA&CS ADFP Trust Fund and the NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation.

The Herd GT-77-ATV model is capable of spreading fire ant bait, seed, fertilizer, and more. It is available to rent for individuals in Durham and surrounding counties.

Rental includes mounting attachments for:

- ATVs
- UTVs
- Small Tractors

Rental Rates: \$10 a day. Check or cash only.  
Call the district today to inquire about renting:  
919-560-0558





# BIONOMIC EDUCATION TRAINING CENTER (BETC)

The BETC Program was created in 2010 as a pilot program to teach students about the growing needs, demands and technological developments in agri-science, green industries, and green infrastructure. The program enhances middle and high school education by actively engaging students in hands-on implementation, activities, and research, as well as the development of critical thinking skills. The program seeks to improve STEM literacy for students by providing teachers with curriculum and training to 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.

In FY25, with the help of students and teachers from Durham Public Schools, ten stormwater BMPs were installed in Durham County residential area. Students participated from Northern High School, Southern School of Energy and Sustainability and Jordan High School. Ten teachers and 92 students participated in the installation of these practices. Most students involved received a stipend for their participation.



Funding for BETC projects and student stipends were made possible in FY25 thanks to the NACD Urban and Community Conservation Grant Initiative.

## DURHAM EASEMENT MONITORING

Eroded streambanks are among the primary contributors to water pollution. Durham Soil and Water Conservation District holds 11 easements for completed restoration projects and is responsible for monitoring the sites annually.



# 2024 DURHAM BIG SWEEP CLEAN-UP



The Annual Durham Big Sweep is the largest litter clean-up event that engages residents, schools, and businesses from around Durham County. The event runs from September 1st-October 31<sup>st</sup>. Durham SWCD has sponsored Durham Big Sweep for over 25 years. Durham SWCD partners with Keep Durham Beautiful (KDB) and the City of Durham Environmental & Street Services to plan and promote Creek Week as well as host clean-up events. The 2024 Durham County and City Employee Big Sweep clean-up event took place on October 24, 2024 and engaged 20 County and City Employees. Together we removed 39 bags of trash, 16 bags of recycling, a road sign, lumber, and more from Camden Ave, Junction Rd, and Club Blvd. For more information visit our website at <https://dconc.gov/Soil-and-Water/Environmental-Education/Durham-County-Big-Sweep> or to sign up visit [www.durhambigsweep.org](http://www.durhambigsweep.org)

**BIG SWEEP**  
**RESULTS** 2024  
**33 TIRES**  
**48 CLEANUP LOCATIONS**  
**263 BAGS OF RECYCLING**  
**844 BAGS OF TRASH**  
**820 VOLUNTEERS**



# 2025 DURHAM CREEK WEEK CLEAN-UP



Creek Week, an annual event that encourages residents to learn about and clean up local waterways, took place in March. Durham SWCD partnered with KDB and the City of Durham Public Works to plan and promote Creek Week as well as host clean-up events.

Durham County SWCD and the Durham County Engineering & Environmental Services Department partnered together to organize the 2025 Durham County and City Employee Creek Week clean-up of Sherwood Park in Durham. The event took place on March 27<sup>th</sup> and engaged 17 County and City Employees. Together we removed 39 bags of trash, 14 bags of recycling, two bikes, and more from Goose Creek and Sherwood Park.

During the entirety of Creek Week, 567 volunteers removed an estimated total of 15,137 lbs of trash from 41 locations across Durham!





# STREAM RESTORATION AND STORMWATER PROJECTS





# CHARLESTOWNE APT. STREAM RESTORATION STABILIZATION PROJECT

The Durham Soil and Water Conservation District (DSWCD) recently secured all the funding needed to start the Charlestowne Apartment Stream Restoration project. Durham SWCD is currently partnering with Reinvestment Partners (RP) and the Piedmont Conservation Council (PCC) to stabilize a stream bank while treating stormwater runoff from the Charlestowne Apartment impervious surface. RP is a Durham-based non-profit organization that seeks to foster healthy and just communities by empowering people, improving places, and influencing policy. Currently RP has recently completed renovations on the apartments to provide safe, affordable housing for low-income families in Durham.



Adjacent to the complex is an Unnamed Tributary to Little Lick Creek, which has migrated to within 10-ft of the building's external wall resulting from exacerbated bank erosion in recent years. The project seeks to stabilize approximately 150 linear feet of the existing stream through channel realignment using bioengineered bank stabilization techniques, incorporation of in-stream grade control structures, installing a stormwater wetland basin and constructing a berm to divert stormwater. Collectively the stream stabilization and green infrastructure practices will reduce sediment and nutrient transport downstream to Little Lick Creek and Falls Lake, a water supply reservoir for the County of Durham.

Implementation of this project will lead to the treatments of Total Nitrogen (TN), Total Phosphorus (TP), and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and reduce the amount that enters the drinking water. It will also increase public awareness regarding water quality which will lead to improved water health. Percent removal of TN, TP, and TSS will be provided through treatment of stormwater runoff by the proposed linear biofiltration swale and stormwater wetland basin. Per the Stormwater Control Measures (SCM) Crediting Document, these measures can remove 10 – 35% TN and 10 – 45% TP.

Final removal rates will be determined during the design development stage when SCM sizing, and drainage area are finalized. Proposed streambank stabilization measures will also reduce contribution of sediment to surface waters within the Little Lick Creek watershed. Sediment reduction estimates will be generated during the design development phase.

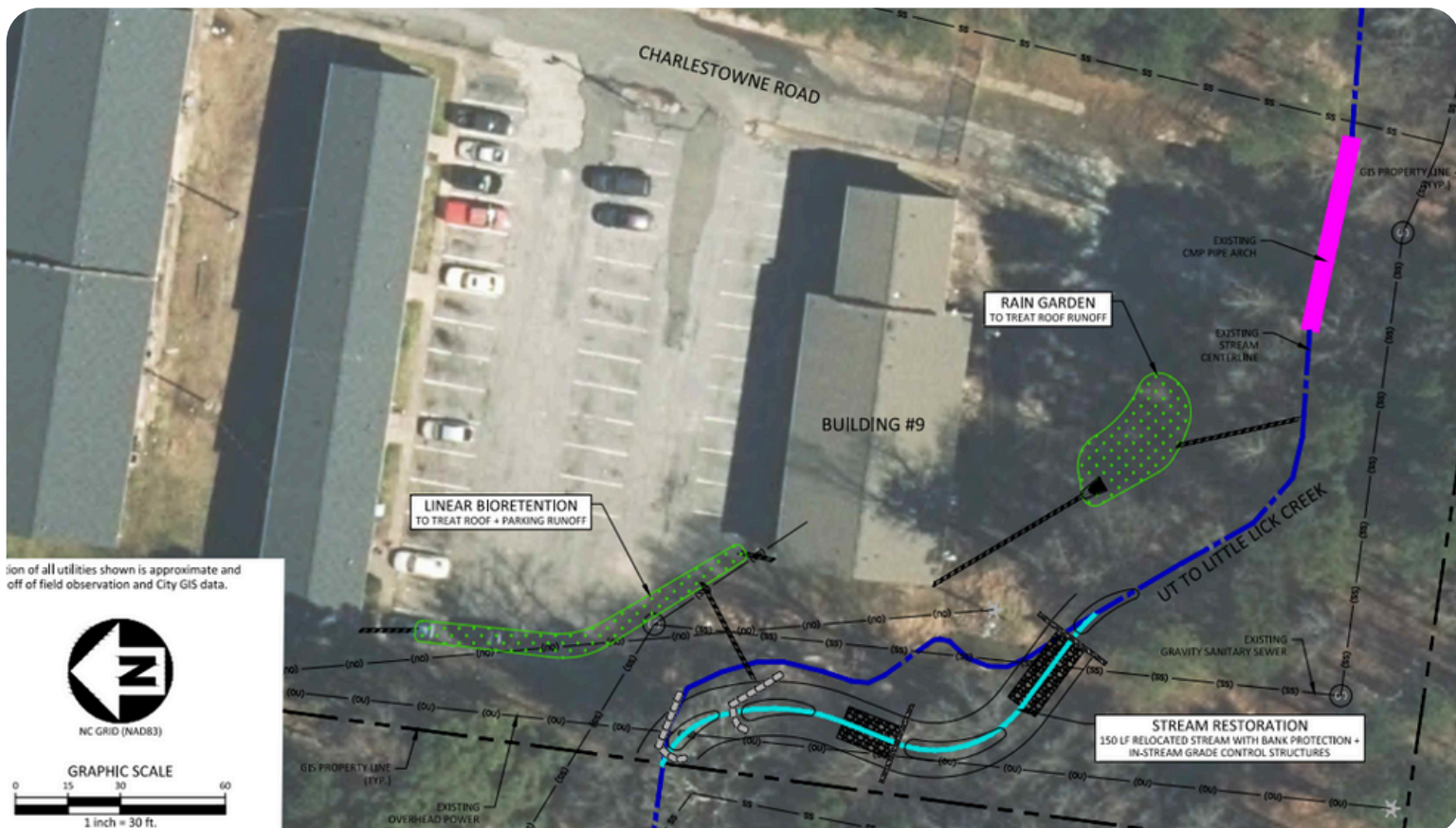


# CHARLESTOWNE APT. STREAM RESTORATION STABILIZATION PROJECT

DSWCD has received grant funding from the Division of Water Resources, EPA and the Division of Soil and Water Conservation StRAP Program. Currently, the project is in the permit phase with construction to follow this fall.



*Before pictures*



**LAND MECHANIC DESIGNS, INC.**  
Stream and Wetland Restoration  
[www.landmechanicdesigns.com](http://www.landmechanicdesigns.com)



# EAGLE/HONEYCUTT STREAM RESTORATION STABILIZATION PROJECT

Durham Soil & Water Conservation District (DSWCD) has recently secured full funding to restore 4,400 linear feet of stream restoration located near the headwaters of Falls Lake. This much needed project is located on the properties of Matthew Eagle and Wanda Wray on two sediment-impaired unnamed tributaries of Ellerbe Creek.

These tributaries are presently on the state's 303(d) impaired streams listed in the Neuse River Basin which drain a portion of eastern Durham County in a still growing suburban section of this urban county. Channelization and straightening of the stream channel, as well as uncontrolled stormwater from urbanization have resulted in a deeply incised streambed with eroding vertical banks and trees that are falling into the channel. Although most of the restoration project is located on a cattle operation, its watershed is already partially developed which contributes to increased flows and worsens the sediment pollution problem in the Neuse River System.

The purpose of this project is threefold: restore 4,400 linear feet of unnamed tributaries to Ellerbe Creek, reduce sediment loading, and establish vegetated riparian buffers along the stream corridor. The project is currently experiencing lateral and vertical instability, excessive bank erosion, and headcuts, and will continue to degrade and contribute approximately 974 tons of soil/year and will be reduced to about 29 tons of soil/year once construction is completed. The potential removal for nitrogen and phosphorus (pounds/year) are 985.01 and 63.44 respectively.

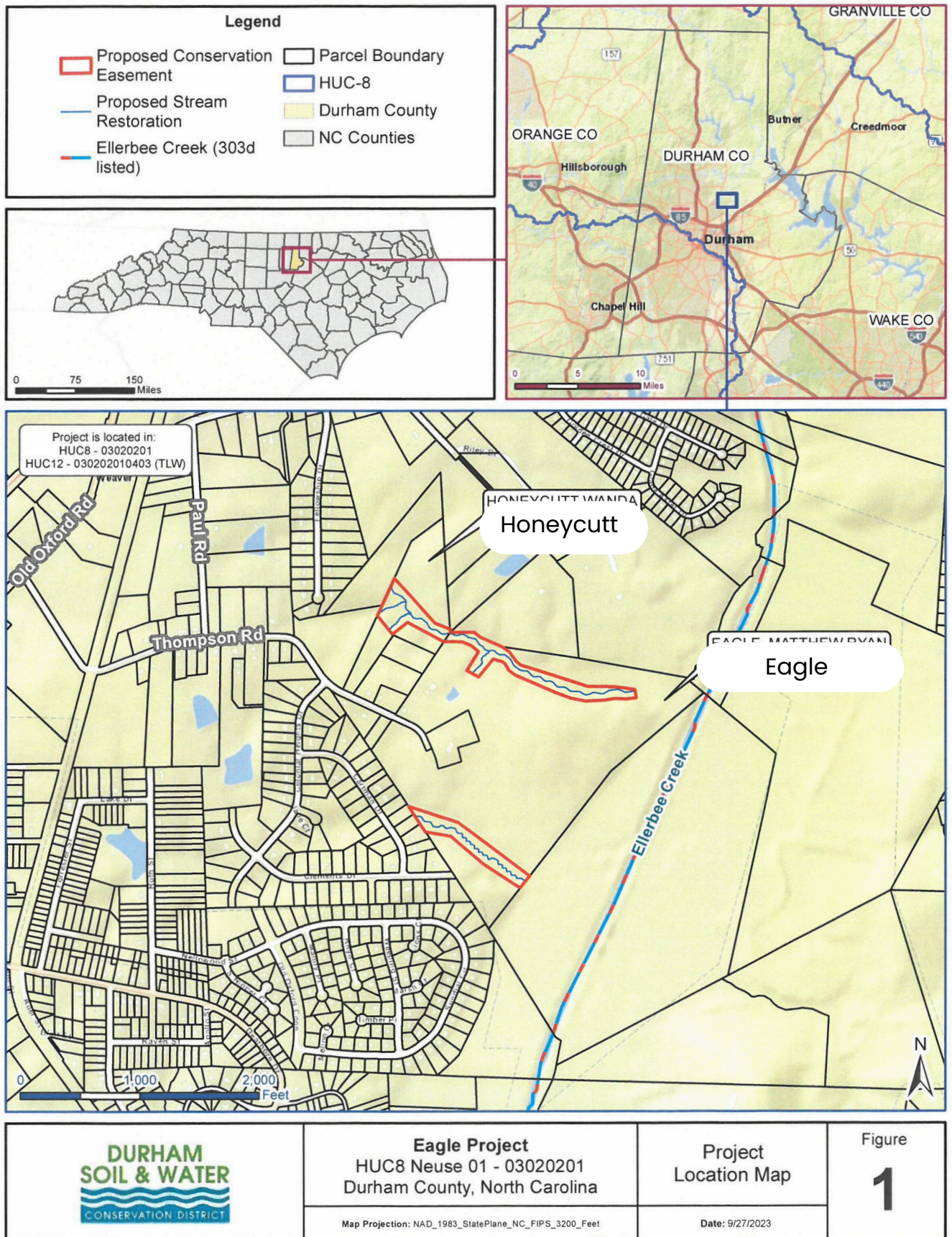
All total, the grants received (\$1.36 million) are from the Raleigh Watershed Protection Program (RWPP), The Land and Water Fund, Division of Water Resources and the Division of Soil and Water StRAP Program. A 60% design has been completed, and the required permit applications have been submitted. Construction is scheduled to start early in 2026.



Before pictures



# EAGLE/HONEYCUTT STREAM RESTORATION STABILIZATION PROJECT



Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





# PARTNERS



# PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL

PCC hired a new part-time Project Manager to support the awarded NCDACS-StRAP (Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program) grant. Haley Bock started in March. Haley and Grace worked together while Haley was serving as the AmeriCorps Environmental Programs Environmental Educator for the Piedmont Triad Regional Council. Based on Haley's experience in "fostering environmental awareness and action for water resource management" she has been a great addition to the team.

The two StRAP projects support the implementation of streambank stabilization and restoration in an urban setting and in a rural setting. For more information, please reach out to Haley at [haley@piedmontconservation.org](mailto:haley@piedmontconservation.org)

We are happy to reveal a much-needed update to the PCC website. Thank you, Lisa Marochak, for helping PCC on our Outreach & Marketing Committee. Thanks also to Haley as we have become more active on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.  
[www.piedmontconservation.org](http://www.piedmontconservation.org)

PCC continues to be active with the Upper Neuse River Basin Association and the Jordan Lake One Water Coalition as work continues the nutrient management rules. We are also continuing to work with local communities, such as the Woodcroft HOA to support the complex issues and effects of stormwater and water quality in those communities.

From fall 2024 through spring 2025, PCC was able to have our first AmeriCorps member to serve to support our agricultural community in our 10-county region. Grace Fine worked with us to support our local SWCD's as needs arose for education, outreach and engagement as well as in supporting districts as they conveyed agricultural and preservation information. Grace's term ended earlier than expected, however she is now contracting with the District.

PCC is available to support the Durham District as well as other local forms of government or communities as needs are identified for watershed/water quality restoration, agricultural sustainability and community & education. We are grateful for the years of partnerships and support from the staff and Supervisors.

If you have project ideas or needs within the regional watersheds or counties PCC serves, please reach out to Grace at [grace@piedmontconservation.org](mailto:grace@piedmontconservation.org) or by cell at 484-554-4076.

Please visit [www.piedmontconservation.org](http://www.piedmontconservation.org) to explore projects we are undertaking or have completed. If you have a need for assistance, please complete the new Project Request google form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfGG8RpJ-Z75CblvfS7Fdno\\_KDuJFbq-vFyII9asKDvJ8Z-cO/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfGG8RpJ-Z75CblvfS7Fdno_KDuJFbq-vFyII9asKDvJ8Z-cO/viewform)



PCC Full Council



LINKEDIN



INSTAGRAM



# WATERSHED REPORT

The Durham Local Advisory Committee discussed the annual review of crop data and the Local Nutrient Control Strategy as outlined by the Neuse Nutrient Management Strategy. Durham farmers reported 843 acres of corn, 587 acres of soybeans, 108 acres of tobacco, 52 acres of wheat, 3 acres of blueberries, 2 acres of grapes, 8 acres of oats, 416 acres of cover crop, and 1,748 acres of hay & pastureland as well as other crops and produce totaling more than 3,900 acres of crop land in crop year 2024. The Nitrogen Loss Estimate Worksheet (NLEW) that was compiled has indicated an 82% nitrogen loss reduction on cropland.

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE REPORT



Working with our wonderful state and county partners in Durham, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) strives to assist farms and landowners to protect their natural resources and address resource concerns on their land. Concerns range from water quality to livestock production, crop health to forest management, and even to wildlife habitat. While our scope and opportunities are expansive, we could not accomplish our goals without the assistance and expertise of our partners and the vibrant communities we serve. Through program administration and technical assistance funded through the Farm Bill, we work diligently to embrace our mission of Helping People Help the Land.

There are 11 active financial assistance contracts in Durham County through NRCS; through these programs farmers are implementing conservation practices such as seasonal high tunnels, livestock exclusion from surface water, and timber management for wildlife habitat. In the 2025 fiscal year, four new applications were funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) totaling \$55K in financial assistance.

While still ongoing, the 2025 fiscal year included several opportunities for producers to apply for financial assistance. The most popular practice for producers in Durham was the seasonal high tunnel system, which extends the growing season for vegetables and cut flowers. Many of the producers we met this year operate small intensive vegetable operations and contribute significantly to the local food economy of Durham. We look forward to expanding outreach and sharing new opportunities with this strong community of local food producers and reaching new audiences in the coming year to better serve all the agricultural producers of Durham County.



High tunnel system



Timber management



Cover crop





# CONSERVATION STORE





# Rental Equipment

## NO-TILL DRILL

Durham Soil and Water has a Great Plains 706NT no-till drill available for farmers to rent in Durham, Person, Orange, Wake, Chatham, and Granville Counties. Rental Rates: \$12.00 per acre (min. 8.3 acres) with a \$100 deposit (check or cash only) Interested renters can call the district today to inquire about renting: 919-560-0558



## Ant Broadcast Spreader

The Herd GT-77-ATV model is capable of spreading fire ant bait, seed, fertilizer, and more. It is available to rent for individuals in Durham and surrounding counties. Rental includes mounting attachments for:

- ATVs
- UTVs
- Small Tractors

Rental Rates: \$10 a day. Check or cash only. Call the district today to inquire about renting: 919-560-0558



# Items For Sale

## 2025 Annual Tree Sale

Our Durham SWCD Annual Tree Sale took place February 25-26, 2025. We sold 636 fruit trees and bushes including apple, fig, peach, pomegranate, blueberry, grape, elderberry, plum, and pecan. We made a profit of \$4,980.37. All proceeds from the tree sale support our environmental education programs. Thank you to everyone that purchased trees from us and to Waller Family Farm for allowing us to hold the sale at their farm.



## Bird Boxes and Wildflower Seeds

Durham SWCD sells Bluebird Boxes, Bat Boxes, and a variety of wildflower seeds all year long. Check out the full list of items we sale on our website. All proceeds from the items we sell support our environmental education programs.





# Contact Us



+919-560-0558



[www.dconc.gov/swcd](http://www.dconc.gov/swcd)



201 E Main St., 5th floor  
Durham, NC 27701

