

# Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District

## Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2008 – 2011



We work with the people who work the land.

### Mission Statement:

The Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, guides citizens and governments in the balanced and sustainable use of natural resources.

## **Introduction**

The Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District was formed under the authority of Title 21, Code of Virginia, passed by the General Assembly in 1938. The District, established in 1975, is a governmental subdivision of the state, encompassing all the land within the boundary lines of Augusta County and the Cities of Staunton and Waynesboro. The purpose of the SWCD is to give citizens the structure and the capability to solve conservation problems at a local grassroots level. The incentive for such problem-solving began with the Dust Bowl/Depression era when we began to realize that land and water were precious resources to be carefully managed, not abused and squandered. Soil and Water Conservation Districts enlist and coordinate help from public and private sources to deal with local conservation issues and provide technical expertise to assist the community in protecting its natural resources.

The District Board of Directors comprises two elected Directors from each jurisdiction (Augusta County, City of Staunton and City of Waynesboro) and two “at-large” Directors appointed by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. Directors are elected under the General Election Laws prescribed by Virginia. One of the appointed Directors is from the Virginia Cooperative Extension and the other is appointed from within District boundaries. There are also a number of Associate Directors, respected in their fields of natural resources, education or business. All of these Directors and Associate Directors serve the District as volunteers.

This plan is intended to guide the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District through the next three years from 2008 – 2011. Its purpose is to take a pro-active approach toward planning the District’s future role in natural resource conservation.

## **District Office Information:**

Physical Location: Headwaters District office is housed in the USDA Building of the Augusta County Government Center in Verona. It is co-located with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, sharing space with the Farm Service Agency.

Street Address: 70 Dick Huff Lane; Verona, VA 24482

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 70; Verona, VA 24482-0070

Phone #: 540-248-6218, ext. 3

FAX #: 540-248-1142

**All programs and services of the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or disability.**

*The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Headwaters SWCD through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The Headwaters SWCD also receives financial assistance from Augusta County, the City of Waynesboro and the City of Staunton, the three local government entities it serves.*

## **Headwaters Strategic Plan 2008-2011**

**Goal I: Administer a sound water quality and soil conservation program, based on research and practical experience.**

- 1. Maximize BMP installation, and increase District capacity to carry them out.**  
*(including the Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program, Farm Bill programs)*
- 2. Encourage voluntary BMP's. Make technical information readily available.**
- 3. Encourage and/or provide nutrient management planning.**
  - a. Promote the tax credit on equipment and practices for landowners who follow a nutrient management plan.*
  - b. Encourage nutrient management planning.*
  - c. Maintain nutrient management certification.*
  - d. Cooperate with private planners and fertilizer distributors.*
  - e. Research and promote alternative methods and plans for nutrients, in cooperation with partner agencies.*
  - f. Monitor nutrient management results. Set new goals for nutrient and soil loss reduction.*
- 4. Encourage the use of urban BMP's and storm water management, with or without cost-share. Be involved with activities to assess urban nutrient management strategies.**
- 5. Promote innovative BMP's by securing funds and, when necessary, request assistance from the Shenandoah RC&D.**
- 6. Enter into Technical Service Provider (TSP) agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), when appropriate.**
- 7. Assist conservation partners with the TMDL process.**
- 8. Promote soil quality and health initiatives.**

**Lead Committee: Agriculture & Cost-Share Committee**

**Goal II: Protect critical natural resource areas (i.e. productive farmland and forest soils, karst topography, water resources, etc.) based on water quality data and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) status.**

- 1. Encourage sustainable forestry practices, based in science, to enhance the District's valuable forest resources through public education and technical services, in concert with the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF), Virginia Cooperative Extension and the United States Forest Service (USFS).**
  - a. Undertake education projects*
  - b. Provide articles to the news media that inform and educate the public on forestry, farming issues*
  - c. Support the forestry demonstration project at the Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research and Education Center at McCormick Farm(SVAREC)*
  - d. Encourage landowners to get and carry out forest stewardship plans.*
  - e. Support woodlot management education.*
- 2. Target impaired and TMDL watersheds for accelerated education and BMP projects, including riparian planting.**
  - a. Host presentations, workshops and sponsor tours concerning natural resource issues (inc. nutrient management, well testing, land use, air and water quality and BMP installations, septic.)*
- 3. Promote riparian buffer zones and their maintenance.**
- 4. Support comprehensive planning for water quality and quantity.**
- 5. Support the Friends of the Shenandoah River (FOSR)/Earth Team Volunteer (ETV) water monitoring program, and publicize data on surface and groundwater in the newspaper.**
- 6. Champion open space and recreational land.**
- 7. Sponsor an annual tree sale.**
- 8. Encourage best practices in urban forestry, including rain gardens, onsite stormwater management, buffers, tree covers, parks.**
- 9. Protect productive agricultural soils from growth and urbanization.**
  - a. Write letters and attending public hearings*
  - b. Encourage protection of prime agricultural land, using tools such as cluster development, LID.*
- 10. Hold and maintain riparian easements and promote ag/forestral districts.**
  - a. Maintain the integrity of easements already held, with annual reviews, and enforcement, if necessary.*

**Lead Committee: Forestry and Riparian Buffer.**

Assist the Land Use Committee with overlapping goals.

**Goal III: Support public policy that is in concert with natural resource conservation.**

- 1. Promote the preservation of productive farmland and open space** *using the following strategies:*
  - a. Agriculture /forestal districts*
  - b. Easements*
  - c. Purchase of development rights*
  - d. Growth management tools, such as Low Impact Development(LID) and cluster development, etc.*
  - e. Partner with Resource Conservation &Development Council(RC&D), United States Department of Agriculture(USDA, Valley Conservation Council) and other agencies to promote land conservation strategies  
Farm Bill Programs, Easements*
  
- 2. Promote the continuation of land use taxation and clarification.**
  - a. The District will keep local officials informed.*
  - b. A District representative will attend public meetings related to land use issues and growth management issues.*
  - c. The District will promote its position through follow-up letters to local officials and/or media concerning land use taxation issues and responsible growth issues.*
  - d. The District will encourage disclosure of tax-payer supported industries by writing letters and attending meetings.*
  
- 3. Review comprehensive plans and ordinance changes in each jurisdiction,** *making comments as appropriate.*
  - a. Promote ordinances that prohibit development above or below flood control dams.*
  - b. Encourage localities to implements urban Best Management Practices(BMP's), including stormwater management strategies and erosion and sediment control measures.*
  - c. Encourage vitalization of urban areas - building back into town*

**Lead Committee: Land Use Committee**

Where there is overlap with other committees, work with the other committees to meet these objectives. (*e.g. Forestry: host presentations and tours, including the topic of land use, riparian buffer zones, cluster development and hybrid zoning.*)

**Goal IV: Provide a comprehensive dam maintenance and safety program.**

- 1. Continue annual inspection and maintenance of District-maintained/owned dams.**
- 2. Cooperate with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in obtaining full certification of flood control structures.**
- 3. Obtain funding for and employ legal assistance in meeting required changes for certification, including the federal rehabilitation program and new regulations from Dam Safety.**
- 4. Pursue ordinances with local governments to prohibit development below dams and in flood pool areas (HEC-HMS models)**
- 5. Evaluate the necessity and effectiveness of dams as they age.**
- 6. Evaluate flow characteristics of auxiliary spillways given standard design flood.**

**Lead Committee: Dam Safety & Maintenance Committee**  
Coordinate, as needed, with Land Use Committee

**Goal V: Represent the District's position on legislative issues, including state and federal mandates, along with the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) and National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).**

- 1. Respond to legislative alerts and issues.** *Write letters and keep communication open with legislators. Keep information going between federal, state and local officials.*
- 2. Pay NACD and VASWCD dues, and support their political action.** *Attend VASWCD state and area meetings, as well as Legislative Day in Richmond.*
- 3. Target and encourage voluntary programs in lieu of mandates.**
- 4. Actively seek grants and funding for unfunded mandates.**

**Lead Committee: Finance - Legislative - Personnel**  
Coordinate with Land Use Committee, as needed.

**Goal VI: Promote responsible decision making and active stewardship of natural resources by better communicating with the public and partnership agencies.**

**1. Promote Environmental Education efforts to youth and adults.**

- a. Respond to requests and/or initiate school programs as often as possible. Coordinate education programs with State Standards of Learning(SOL's) and local curricula. Provide materials and offer support for school projects.*
- b. Sponsor conservation field days and encourage multi-agency participation, especially agriculture education for the general public.*
- c. Promote and support Envirothon, Youth Conservation Camp and scholarship programs through the VASWCD. Observe Soil Stewardship Week and Natural Resources Conservation Week, forwarding materials and press releases as they arrive. teacher workshops, provide information and materials*

**2. Increase public awareness of the District and its services.**

- a. Continue to improve the 2 newsletters and mailing list*
- b. Maintain contacts with news media by supplying press releases and inviting press representatives to meetings and conservation tours*
- c. Develop promotional materials for public awareness.
  - 1. Create an annual report, which will serve as a brochure. Place annual reports at the farm bureau, government centers, Chamber of Commerce, etc.**
- d Update and display the Headwaters District Display Board.
  - 1. attend the county fair, Riverfest, etc.**
- e Make presentations to civic and professional groups on the District's role and activities.*
- f. Maintain website.*

**3. Pursue joint projects with local civic organizations.**

- a. Involve the public in conservation work projects, such as monitoring, cleanups*
- b. Address realtors, developers, contractors, produce auction, "influentials" (watershed-wide projects)*

**4. Nominate and give awards for environmental achievement.**

**5. Tours, presentations and news items.**

**6. Expand volunteer activity.**

- a. Support the volunteer monitoring projects and data dissemination.*

**Lead Committee: Education Committee**

Coordinate with other committees, e.g. Forestry & Riparian Buffer, Agriculture & Cost-Share, as needed.

**Goal VII: Establish and maintain a stable and reliable core-funding base at the federal, state and local levels for operations and cost-share funds.**

1. At the federal level:
  - through the NRCS
  - should use Shenandoah RC&D (whenever possible for additional funding)At the state level:
  - through the VASWCD
  - through DCR, maintain all planning & accounting procedures with care
  - through the legislatureAt the local level:
  - Augusta County Board of Supervisors
  - Staunton City Council
  - Waynesboro City Council
2. **Build relationships and provide accountability to funding sources.**
  - a. *Provide an annual report of accomplishment to state and local legislators and officials, as well as photographs, newsletters and other mailings.*
  - b. *Invite these people to the awards dinner, tours and other events.*
3. **Aggressively seek cost-share funds for landowners so voluntary BMP's can continue.**
4. **Use alternative and innovative methods to secure funding.**
  - a. *Promote the Tree Seedling Sale as a fundraiser (coordinate with Forestry & Riparian Buffer Committee)*
  - b. *Write grants for special projects (coordinate with Education Committee)*
    1. *RC&D, Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, etc.*

**Lead Committee: Finance - Legislative - Personnel**

Coordinate with Agriculture & Cost-Share, Forestry & Riparian Buffer and Education Committees, as needed.

**The Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors hereby endorses this Strategic Plan for 2008 – 2011.**

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Charles E. Horn, Sr., *Chairman*

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Richard M. Shiflet, *Vice-Chairman*

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Walter L. Flora, *Secretary*

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Charles C. Schooley

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Stephen E. Talley

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian R. Jones

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Associate Directors**

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**Staff**

John L. Kaylor, Conservation Specialist  
Cathy B. Perry, Office Administrator  
Sandy Greene, Education Specialist

Bobby Drumheller, Conservation Technician  
Joelle Hackney, TMDL Technician

## **Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District**

### **Committee Structure**

- **Dam Safety & Maintenance Committee**
- **Finance – Legislative Committee**  
– **Personnel Committee**
- **Education Committee**
- **Agriculture & Cost-Share Committee**
- **Forestry & Riparian Buffer Committee**  
\* **Easements (Sub-committee)**
- **Land Use Committee**  
\* **Water Monitoring (Sub-committee)**

## **Acronym Glossary**

### Agencies/Organizations

ACOE – Army Corps of Engineers  
ACSA – Augusta County Service Authority  
DCR – Department of Conservation and Recreation  
DDFSM – Division of Dam Safety & Floodplain Management  
DEQ – Department of Environmental Quality  
DGIF – Department of Game & Inland Fisheries  
DOF – Department of Forestry  
DSWC – Division of Soil and Water Conservation  
FOSR – Friends of Shenandoah River  
FSA – Farm Service Agency  
NACD – National Association of Conservation Districts  
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service  
PW Forum – Shenandoah Valley Pure Water Forum  
RC&D – Resource Conservation & Development Council  
SVAREC – Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research & Extension Center  
SWCD – Soil and Water Conservation District  
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture  
USFS – United States Forest Service  
VASWCD – Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
VCC – Valley Conservation Council  
VCE – Virginia Cooperative Extension  
VDH – Virginia Department of Health  
VOF – Virginia Outdoors Foundation

### Programs

BMP – Best Management Practice  
CREP – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program  
CRP – Conservation Reserve Program  
CSP – Conservation Security Program  
EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program  
FRPP – Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program  
GRP – Grassland Reserve Program  
WHIP – Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program  
WRP – Wetlands Reserve Program

### Other

ETV – Earth Team Volunteer  
HEC – Hydrologic Engineering Center  
LID – Low Impact Development  
NMP – Nutrient Management Plan  
TMDL – Total Maximum Daily Load  
TSP – Technical Service Provider