



NEW HANOVER COUNTY

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Spring E-Newsletter

Stay informed of your local district happenings!

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 - 2023 North Carolina State Envirothon



- *Above photo: 4-H Mudpuppies Team and Coaches*
- 4-H Mudpuppies represented New Hanover County Soil & Water Conservation District this month at the State Envirothon held at Cedarock Park in Burlington, North Carolina. The 4-H Mudpuppies competed in the middle school division with 45 teams from across the state. Team members were tested in areas of soil, aquatic ecology, wildlife, forestry, and current environmental issues. The 4-H Mudpuppies placed first in Area 6 Coastal Envirothon and placed 25th in the State Competition. We are proud of their hard work

and dedication! We would like to thank their parents and guardians, the volunteers, teachers, and coaches, for supporting the teams throughout this competition year!

- **2023 Earth Day Festival**



Above: Program Coordinator and son at Earth Day Festival

On April 22nd, 2023 NHCSWCD participated in the annual Wilmington Earth Day Festival! Despite a stormy forecast, the vendors, food trucks, breweries, and several residents came out to enjoy the festival. “Invest in our Planet” was the theme for this year’s Earth Day Festival. Participants could “invest” by purchasing raffle tickets, supporting local sustainable vendors, and purchasing vegan cuisine from food trucks. NHCSWCD set up an outreach booth at the event, as well as provided staff for volunteering, materials for the festival, and advertising on social media. We are looking forward to next year’s event. We hope that you choose to “invest in our planet” each day by shopping locally, planting native plants, and supporting local sustainable businesses in New Hanover County.

New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District Endorses New Island Creek Basin White Paper

New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District Endorses New Island Creek Basin White Paper

Titled, “Island Creek Basin Ecosystem: An Imperiled Biodiversity Hotspot”, the white paper was published on March 30, 2023, and asks important questions about the status quo on development in Wilmington and the surrounding region WILMINGTON, N.C., 5/8/2023 - On March 30, 2023, the Supervisors of the New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District voted unanimously to support a new white paper that summarizes the value of the land and sensitive living systems targeted for development in northern New Hanover County known as the “Island Creek Basin Ecosystem”, and frames the threat that traditional development will pose to our quality of life. While recognizing that some development is inevitable in the northern parts of New Hanover County, the authors

note that the presence of significant plant communities, the value of the existing ecosystem services, the flooding impact on downstream communities, and the predominance of hydric soils in the area should be fully considered before development occurs. “It is important to protect some of the remaining natural areas in NHC,” said Professor Shew, Associate Supervisor with Soil & Water, Senior Lecturer of Geology, Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, and co-author of the white paper, “and to determine the ability of these areas to meet both stormwater and floodwater concerns for our citizens and for the County as well as to meet infrastructure needs.” With only limited space left for development in the county, and flooding and lack of green space already primary issues, the white paper is coming at a critical time in the conversation around the future of New Hanover County. Traditional development in the northern parts of the county threaten to exacerbate these problems, and represents a significant challenge to local municipal governments and future generations in our region. The white paper provides a platform for citizens calling for deeper consideration by local decision makers. “According to the USEPA, southeast North Carolina is one four ecoregions in America experiencing extreme wetland loss due to development and forestry activities,” says Andy Wood, director of Coastal Plain Conservation Group, and co-author of the white paper. “Developing wetland habitats harms biodiversity, increases flooding and water pollution, and saddles residents with infrastructure costs that development revenues don’t cover. Before approving new developments, planners and policymakers should consider cumulative impacts in their approval process.” Included in the white paper are specific recommendations for local policy makers to consider in regards to potential next steps. Development is irreversible, we believe, as do many citizens, that it is critical to get it right the first time.

Access the full white paper, here:

<https://www.nhcgov.com/2504/Endorsements-and-Resolutions>

Press Release by Evan Folds, NHCSWCD Board Supervisor

Landscaping and Lawn Care



“April showers bring May flowers” is a common phrase to generalize the spring weather and the arrival of many blooms. Landscaping and lawn care best management practices have been outlined in the Environmental Protection Agency’s Best Management Practices for Landscaping and Lawn Care. As you being to manage your lawn, consider these best management practices:

Fertilizers

Stormwater discharge that contains fertilizer pollutes waterways with nitrogen and phosphorous that may encourage algae growth. Excessive algae growth may lead to dead zones, which are oxygen-deprived zones where fish and other natural ecosystems cannot survive. Municipalities that have issues with water quality and/or algae blooms should inform their communities about proper fertilizer types and usage. Appropriate fertilizer timing is specific to each region and vegetation type; therefore, municipalities may want to develop their own resources. Examples of fertilizer tips include the following: use no more than the amount that the fertilizer manufacturer recommends, apply fertilizer close to the root of the plant, don’t apply fertilizer close to waterways, don’t overwater lawns that have fertilizer, and try to use certain nutrient-efficient fertilizers.

Alternative Landscaping Techniques

Alternative landscaping techniques involve planting and maintaining drought- and pest-resistant turf and native species to reduce the impacts of lawn care practices on watersheds. An example of alternative landscaping is nature scaping, the practice of using native plants that are more drought-, pest- and disease-resistant than nonnative species (East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, n.d.).

Read the EPA’s Best Management Practices for Landscaping and Lawn Care
Here: <https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/lawn-and-garden>